Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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FBIS-NES-96-114 *12 June 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief—UK 'Reconsidering' Lockerbie Proposal

MM1106154396 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 10-16 Jun 96 p 5

[Report by Ashraf al-Faqiyy: "'Abd-al-Majid: Developments in Lockerbie Case"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has revealed that Britain is reconsidering the League's proposal that the two Libyans accused in the Lockerbie case appear before a Scottish court at any UN headquarters. He believes that this is good progress. He believes that Libya's agreement to the proposal is evidence of its seriousness in tackling the crisis and its desire to close the file.

'Abd-al-Majid started his tour, which took him to five states, with a visit to Libya, where he met with Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi before his visit to Britain. 'Abd-al-Majid told AL-WASAT that the Libyan leader expressed full cooperation with the League's efforts and pledged to accept a fair trial of the two Libyan suspects under the rules of Scottish law...but he casts doubt on the U.S. Administration's and Britain's desire to solve this problem.

Then 'Abd-al-Majid went on to Malta, at whose airport, according to the U.S. attorney general's office, the suitcase used to blow up the U.S. aircraft was placed. But Maltese officials denied it, renewing their proposal to hold the trial in Malta.

'Abd-al-Majid discussed the legal dimension of the Lockerbie crisis with British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and informed him of "the soundness of the Libyan position rejecting extradition from a legal angle." He pointed to new developments in the crisis, including Britain's and France's rejection of the U.S. proposal to impose sanctions on companies dealing with Libya. He added that he conveyed to the British "a clear message, namely that rigidity on their part concerning extradition will not resolve the issue."

After his return to Cairo, 'Abd-al-Majid received Jum'ah al-Fazzani, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for unity, and informed him of the results of his talks in Britain.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 5 Jun

NC1106155096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 5 June 1996 edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-NUR that pertain to political Islamic issues.

This issue of AL-NUR, carrying serial number 622, appeared after an eight-month hiatus. The last issue of AL-NUR received by Nicosia Bureau was dated 4 October 1995 and carried serial number 621. In a 200-word box on page 1, the newspaper says it hopes that from now on it can appear "uninterruptedly." It refers to "difficult circumstances" that forced this "temporary stoppage," which it says it hopes "will not recur." In the past the newspaper has promised to appear on a more regular basis but this has not happened so far.

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LAND SLATED FOR U.S. EMBASSY IN JERUSALEM SAID TO BE WAQF

An unattributed 250-word report on page 1 says the land on which the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem will be built is Islamic waqf land. Citing an "informed source" at the Arab League, the report says the land is situated on the Bethlehem Road in an area known as the "Allenby Barracks," where the British Army camped after it entered Jerusalem in 1918. The report adds that Israel confiscated this land and sold it to the U.S. Government during the Bush administration for one U.S. dollar. The land was owned by Sa'd al-Khalili, who gave it to the Islamic Awqaf Department in Jerusalem. The current custodian of the land is 'Ali al-Fityani.

KING FAHD OF SAUDI ARABIA SAID TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH

A 200-word report by Hamdi Shafiq on page 1 says that King Fahd "a few days ago" received Arab and foreign visitors. The king appeared in "good health," putting an end to "rumors" circulated by "hostile forces" trying to cast doubt on the Kingdom's political stability. The newspaper mentions that the Kuwaiti and Bahraini foreign ministers were among the officials received by King Fahd.

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AL-AZHAR SHAYKH MEETS AL-AZHAR ULEMA FRONT LEADERS

According to an unattributed 400-word report on pages 1 and 9, a meeting was held recently between al-Azhar Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi and the al-Azhar Ulema Front [AUF]. The meeting was arranged by al-Azhar University Rector Dr. Ahmad 'Umar Hashim to "clear the atmosphere" between the two sides. Those attending included AUF leader Dr. Muhammad 'Abd-al-Mun'im Birri and AUF Secretary General Dr. Yahya Isma'il. During the meeting Tantawi said that he had visited the Lions Club in "good faith" to participate in an Islamic gathering on some religious fatwas. He explained that "he was not aware" of the club's aims and motives, adding that "he performed his duty as part of his Islamic mission" and that some newspapers had blown it out of all proportion by describing it as a "penetration by these clubs of the holy al-Azhar."

The report then describes the Lions and Rotary as "suspect," as serving the goals of "world Zionism" and concealing their real objectives behind "bright slogans," such as "freedom, brotherhood, and equality." These clubs, it is said, attract prominent figures with high positions, enroll them as members, and exploit them to deceive others and spread their poison through these figures. The report also mentions that the AUF was founded in 1946. It was banned by late Egyptian President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and was reestablished on 5 January 1967. The AUF aims to promote the status of Islam and Muslims, to defend the interests of al-Azhar and its scholars, and to spread Islamic culture, to fight proselytization and atheism, and to protect public morals, the report concludes.

ARTICLE URGES HIGHER SALARIES FOR MOSQUE PREACHERS

In a 900-word article on page 1, AL-NUR Board Chairman al-Hamzah D'ibis supports the idea that [words indistinct] should be the body responsible for selecting and licensing mosque preachers. He calls on the Ministry of Awqaf to improve the preacher's lot by raising their salaries because they are the nation's think tank and the true representatives of Islam.

REPORT CITES ALLEGED U.S.-HAMAS DIALOGUE

On page 2 the newspaper publishes a 2,000-word unattributed report on what it claims to be "the full text of a dialogue" between the U.S. Administration and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. The newspaper says the meetings between U.S. officials and Hamas representatives took place in Amman, Damascus, Tunis, and Morocco. The report adds that the United States took accurate notes of the discussions and summarized them in a memorandum.

The memorandum, disclosed by an "informed source," focuses on Hamas' religious beliefs and ideas leading it to oppose the peace process in the Middle East. It notes that the Hamas representatives expressed hard-line views and focused on the ideas of jihad, fighting, and war against any aggression on their land, honor, and property. According to the memorandum, Hamas religious beliefs allow the killing of Jews "anywhere, even outside Palestine." Hamas believes that Palestine is Arab and only Arabs can live there. After listening to these views, the U.S. officials proposed that the talks between Hamas and Israel start from a "middle-of-the-road" point. The U.S. Administration called on Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist within secure borders and on Israel to recognize the Palestinians' political rights. The Hamas representatives rejected this proposal, arguing that Israel, the stronger party, would try to impose "unfair" conditions on the Palestinians, who are the weaker party. The U.S. officials intervened to say that the nature of the talks would be governed by UN resolutions and not by Israeli conditions imposed on the Palestinians. The Hamas representatives answered that these UN resolutions recognize Israel as a state but do not recognize the Palestinian people as a dispersed people who used to live in their own country. Regarding terrorism, the Hamas representatives defended their operations and called for differentiation between acts of terrorism and acts of legitimate self-defense. The Hamas representatives said their operations are in defense of rights that have been "usurped" by Israel. The Palestinians have no alternative but to use weapons to restore their rights. The U.S. officials said the Palestinians can have the chance to get their rights without resorting to arms, murder, and destruction. The Hamas representatives answered: "How can rights be restored when Israel is usurping more rights?," pursuing a colonization policy, and uprooting Palestinians from their lands. The U.S. officials said these Israeli policies can stop if the Palestinians enter into "serious" negotiations with Israel. The Hamas representatives answered that the word "negotiations" means concessions. The whole world, including the United States, knows that Israel has "usurped" the Palestinian rights, they said.

DISMISSED PREACHER 'ABD-AL-SABUR SHAHIN INTERVIEWED

On page 4 the newspaper publishes a 1,500-word interview with Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Shahin by Khalid Muhammad. Shahin was recently dismissed as a preacher at 'Amr Bin-al-'As Mosque in Cairo. In the introduction

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the newspaper describes Shahin as a famous Islamic writer known for his "moderate and enlightened" views. He became a preacher at 'Amr Bin-al-'As Mosque several years ago. The people loved him and thousands of worshipers gathered every Friday to listen to his sermons.

Asked about the real reasons for his dismissal, Shahin says this "strange" decision is part of a "premeditated plan" against Islamic propagation. He says former Awqaf Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub was asked often to stop the Friday sermon at 'Amr Bin-al-'As Mosque but he refused to carry out this "ugly" deed. He regrets that incumbent Awqaf Minister Dr. Mahmud Zaqzuq agreed to dismiss him, thus erasing a "beautiful scene." Shahin says that, "surprisingly," the decision to dismiss him coincided with the collapse of part of the mosque's ceiling, resulting in the closure of three fourths of the mosque. Worshippers could not find a place to pray, hence their number dwindled.

Shahin maintains that no security-related incident has ever occurred in the mosque's square despite the volume of worshippers. The mosque, he says, was a testimony that "there was freedom" in Egypt and that God's voice is high. Unfortunately, the banner of Islamic propagation has been lowered, freedom has suffered, and those who have dismissed him have harmed Egypt's reputation, offering the biggest proof to its enemies that there is no freedom in the Egyptian street. Shahin goes on to say that the Egyptian media have always trumpeted that Egypt under Mubarak has never "broken a pen, closed a newspaper, or silenced a voice." "What do they say now after they have silenced a voice that used to call for kindness, that interpreted the book of God, and that guided the youth to the correct course?" Shahin says he knows that Egyptian officials tell the seculars: "Rest assured, we are on the same wavelength. We will silence every voice that speaks of truth and we will enable you to implement your plans against education, propagation, culture, and information." Shahin says there is a plan to "curtail" Islamic preaching in Egypt by preventing the building of new mosques without prior license from the Ministry of Awqaf. He asks what harm can befall the minister of Awqaf "if Egypt becomes full of mosques." "Nobody is asking from him funds or employees. Is it necessary to sequester intentions and to curtail the Islamic presence in the Egyptian street? This is a strange thing indeed," he says.

Answering a question, Shahin says any attempt to shorten the duration of the Friday sermon or to limit its topics is a "destruction" of the freedom of Islamic propagation in Egypt.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: U.S. Consul, PA Official Discuss Israeli Election Results

TA1106162096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1450 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting was held this morning in Ramallah between Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, the official in charge of information in the Palestinian Authority [PA], and Edward Abington, the U.S. consul general, to discuss the situation and Palestinian-U.S. relations in light of the Israeli election results.

After the meeting, the U.S. consul told our correspondent Kayid Zahir that we should be cautious at this point in judging the new Israeli Government before it is formed and begins negotiating with the Palestinian side, especially since the new prime minister, Netanyahu, has stated that he is committed to the peace process, and the United States takes him at his word.

[Begin recording] [Abington, in English] The new government has not been formed yet. It has not gone before the Knesset for a vote of confidence, and I think it is premature to try to judge what the policies of the new government will be. Mr. Netanyahu said he is committed to the peace process, and the United States takes him at his word, but I will leave it to my friend here to speak about the Palestinian view of this.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Naturally, we are holding continuous consultations with the various countries concerned with the political process. The United States is one of these major countries. We have asked the United States to play a larger role in order to ensure the continuation of the political process. Moreover, the sponsors, the European Union, and the various international blocs should also play a role.

The issue is not one of returning to the Madrid conference. We do not want to return, as you say, to square one. We believe that numerous steps have been taken between Madrid and the present time. The important thing is that we continue those steps. Otherwise, damage will be inflicted not only on one side but on all the parties concerned, including Israel. [end recording]

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Palestinian Affairs: PLO's Qaddumi on Final-Phase Negotiations

MM1006155196 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 8 Jun 96 p 7

[Interview with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, by unidentified correspondent in Tunis; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has stated that the United States is no longer an impartial sponsor of the peace process because of its blatant alignment with Israel. How do you assess the U.S. role on all the Middle East peace tracks?

[Qaddumi] Experience has shown that the United States is flagrantly aligned with Israel and that is why the peace process has stumbled on all three Arab tracks, the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese. The United States has not taken the initiative to bridge the views of the parties to the conflict on the basis on which the political settlement was founded. It has allowed Israel to take actions and measures in violation of the basis on which that settlement was founded. There can be no doubt that the U.S. failure to pressure Israel into adhering to the land-for-peace principle and Israel's attempts to come up with partial solutions on all the Arab tracks have impeded the settlement and have given Israel much room to maneuver.

The political settlement now requires some restraining factor that would confirm the principles on which it was based, namely an Israeli commitment to withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories including Jerusalem. Regrettably, the settlement process began branching out into various details and the negotiations were lost in these details and began to stray away from the basis and principles included in the U.S. land-for-peace initiative. On the Palestinian track, for instance, Israel still controls the crossings — imports and exports — and still controls the water, electricity, and telephone authorities. Had Israel withdrawn and fulfilled the principles on which the Madrid peace initiative was based, there would have been no need to talk about water, electricity, and telephones, but Israel is acting as if it, not the Palestinian people, has sovereignty over the territory and the Palestinian people have no sovereignty over their territory and resources. Resolution 242 calls for withdrawal and it is not a question of what happens after the withdrawal. In other words the territory belongs to the Palestinian people and therefore the Israelis have no right to discuss with us such matters as electricity, water, exports, and imports. Bringing these details into the negotiations means giving Israel a share of our resources, and that we categorically reject.... Actually, the problem lies not in the question of taking over these authorities but in the question of Israeli withdrawal, not redeployment of its forces. That is a very serious matter.... The United States is responsible for all that because there is a balance of power anomaly — and because of that anomaly we accepted the U.S. initiative so that there would be a balance in the interest of achieving a just solution and creating the right circumstances for the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East and for peaceful coexistence between us and the Israelis. But this present way will not achieve peace. There may be some calm for a period of time but that will be followed by another explosion because peace would be built on quicksand.... This is a very important matter. To me peace is like an arch on columns. These columns must be strong because if one of them is weak the arch will break up and collapse.... It would lean to the weak side and then collapse. The columns supporting the arch must be strong from the Palestinian, Arab, and Israeli angles in order to be able to support the heavy arch of peace and settlement. In other words, all parties should get their rights in accordance with the U.S. initiative. But a balance of power tipped in favor of Israel enables it to impose its own concepts of peace and political settlement, as is clearly the case now. That will not establish peace. The United States, and especially the current administration, is not playing an active role in this connection. It just carries messages from one party to another on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and it views the Palestinian track as a local track where Israel brings up these details and tries to dictate whatever suits it on the pretext of security. It closes the crossings, refuses to release the detained Palestinian strugglers, and controls the import and export of goods. In other words it has its hands on the Palestinian throat at this point, but the settlement requires its withdrawal — that they should leave this land, and if they do not then there will be no peace but an illusory calm.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] You have said that the political settlement now requires a new restraining factor to ensure honesty, impartiality, and nonalignment with any party.... Do you believe that Europe, and particularly France, can play that role?

[Qaddumi] It was clear that France played an active part in the recent events which followed the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. France insisted on playing that role and on reaffirming its participation in and contribution to the peace process. That is significant and I believe that the European states must participate in the peace process and use their weight and political influence to achieve something on the Arab tracks and to rectify and rescue other tracks, especially the Palestinian

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track where there has been no success to speak of. Israel should have redeployed its forces in accordance with the Oslo agreements, but it has not done that and continues to postpone the redeployment. That demonstrates that Israel does not honor the agreements and treaties it signs nor does it abide by their provisions. Israel looks down on the Palestinian side and does not consider it an equal party in these negotiations. What it concedes it concedes out of sympathy, but we have our rights in Palestine and Israel must withdraw from Palestinian territory. We will continue to struggle for these rights until we achieve them. That is why we say that Europe must join the peace process and so must the United Nations, and the Russian Federation should reactivate its role in the peace process because its role has been a quiet and silent one and it has not taken any serious action to improve the situation on the peace tracks, leaving it to the United States to play havoc with them as it likes. Regrettably, Russia has even sometimes agreed with the measures taken by the United States in this connection.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you view the Arab role at this stage?

[Qaddumi] As far as the Palestinian track is concerned, the issues which must be negotiated are issues which can only be resolved through Arab accord.... There is the issue of the refugees which must be resolved with the participation of the Arab states which host these Palestinian refugees.... There is the issue of Jerusalem, and the Arab states have the direct responsibility of saving Jerusalem, and that also applies to the Islamic states and the Vatican which is a partner as far as the Jerusalem issue is concerned.... The Arab states must also play a special role in connection with the issue of the settlements to help the Palestinians in having them dismantled. The remaining issues in the final negotiations are the central issues in the Palestinian question: return of the refugees, border demarcation, Jerusalem, the settlements, relations with neighbors...all these matters call for Arab accord and Arab coordination.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is a Palestinian-Israeli peace possible without a Syrian-Israeli peace? Some say that is impossible. What is your view?

[Qaddumi] That is true, because Israel continues to evade and procrastinate. It does not want to abide by the foundations on which the political settlement was based, namely Resolution 242 which calls for withdrawal to the 1967 borders. Other matters would then have to be resolved after withdrawal, but Israel insists on charging a price for its occupation of the Arab territories and claims that that price is the guarantee.... The establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel is a matter pertaining to the sovereignty of each state neighboring Israel.

Termination of the state of war and recognition of the border of that state [Israel] comes through the political settlement but as far as the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel is concerned, Syria has a right to say no, the state of war must be terminated first, which means that Israel must withdraw fully from the Golan and southern Lebanon if peace is to prevail. That is the peace that would promote the appropriate circumstances and lead to normal relations between Israel and the Arab states, not the question of security. But Israel insists on taking security measures and on normalization of relations before withdrawal, as if to dictate its preconditions. That is not what President Bush's U.S. land-for-peace initiative stipulates.... Give us the territory and there will be peace. Even more important than that, Israel must first recognize Palestinian rights including the Palestinian people's right to have their own state on the basis of the partition resolution. We will accept nothing less, unless there is a phased process in which case a temporary solution may be acceptable.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Many Palestinians I have met are frustrated and pessimistic about the negotiations on the final phase. Do you have the same feelings or not?

[Qaddumi] Israel is trying to dictate its terms for a political settlement, relying on its deterrent power and its nuclear weapons and the flagrant partiality of the U.S. Administration — but that will not last. The weakness of the Arab position does not mean ceding Palestinian national rights. There must be insistence on these rights even if the negotiations go on for many years, because if we want a just and comprehensive peace we must insist on the foundations on which the political settlement was based and on our rights as recognized by the United Nations.

Saying that the balance of powers does not permit us to regain all our rights does not mean that we should make concessions. We should stand firm, struggle, and convince the world that peace can only be based on a balance of interests in accordance with the UN resolutions.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] But Resolutions 242 and 338 are no longer the terms of reference. The Oslo agreement is.

[Qaddumi] That is why we had our reservations regarding the Oslo agreement. We did not want terms of reference other than the one we had accepted, namely President Bush's initiative which upholds Resolution 242 and the land-for-peace principle. At any rate, the Palestinian

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people cannot possibly give up their national rights. The world, through the UN resolutions, supports these Palestinian rights. We should really make no concessions.

If the balance of powers is at present in Israel's favor, it does not mean that we accept that reality. We must insist on our rights and continue our struggle by all means. We do want peace and we have said that the solution must be based on having two states, one Jewish and one Palestinian Arab in accordance with the partition Resolution 181. We will insist on that. That is what the Palestine National Council [PNC] decided in 1988 in Algiers, the same council which elected Brother Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat] president of the Palestinian state and Brother Abu-al-Lutf [Qaddumi] as its foreign minister and which considered the PLO Executive Committee the provisional Palestinian government.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Hamas is saying that there is a danger threatening the Palestinian people which could develop into a civil war because of the attitude of the National Authority towards its activists. How do you see this?

[Qaddumi] We are making every possible effort to prevent a clash among the Palestinian patriotic forces or between the patriotic forces and the Palestinian Authority [PA]. We must settle our differences peacefully or through dialogue. That means that any clash between us will be a loss for us all. We must not be led or lead ourselves to ruination.... That is something we are avoiding and we are trying, through dialogue among all forces regardless of their strength or weakness, to reach understanding, but not to force one party or another, through coercion or repressive operations, to accept our views. On the contrary, disagreement is only natural. There is a Palestinian Authority in the experimental stage, a newborn authority which has made mistakes. I am one of the people who criticize that Authority frequently but that does not mean that we should enter into a conflict with it. The experiment is still at the beginning and Arab national circumstances do not at this stage encourage major leaps forward in this connection, but that does not mean that we capitulate and admit that we are weak and say that we should accept certain mistakes or sins. On the contrary, we should focus our criticism on corruption — any sign of repression.... We should criticize strongly. I believe that our brothers at home are aware of these facts and are trying to avoid any clash with the patriotic parties.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] According to available information, the situation in the Palestinian autonomy areas is extremely bad, economically and socially, because of Israel's blockade and closure policy. Do you not believe that this undermines the Palestinians' confidence in the National Authority?

[Qaddumi] So far, the Israeli rulers are not convinced of the need for a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace.... Israel still behaves like an occupation force and that impedes the implementation of the agreements, bad and unfair as they are. It does not abide by dates or texts and it tries to put pressure on and level many charges against the PA. This does not mean that the PA is infallible. No. I criticized it in the past and will do so today and in the future, but the main cause of unemployment is the Israeli blockade.... Israel wants to tell the world that the PA is incapable of managing its own affairs and that Israel must remain a trustee for the Authority. The responsibility for blocking the peace process rests with the Israeli rulers. They are the ones imposing the blockade on the Palestinian people, confiscating more Palestinian land..., controlling the crossings.... By now 700,000 refugees should have entered, but not one has so far done so despite the formation of the Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli quadripartite committee. Israel and Peres are saying: How can we let these Palestinians in if they are not committed to the agreements? Only PLO employees have entered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. No refugee has entered. So Israel has no credibility. I have said repeatedly that I do not trust Israel and that there should be a power that compels Israel to implement these unfair agreements. I am still fully convinced that Israel does not want peace and that Israeli society has not developed to the point of pushing the Israeli rulers to move seriously, sincerely, and honestly towards peaceful coexistence with the Palestinians. They still see the Palestinians as second class citizens. That is how they treat the Palestinians.... Israel is a racist state. That is why we say that Israel is responsible for the bad conditions, whether they are economic, social, political, or security conditions.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The PA bet on victory for Peres in the Israeli elections on the grounds that he is a man of peace. Do you believe that bet to be justified?

[Qaddumi] I do not believe that the PA bet on a Peres success on the grounds that he is the great hope. Some in the Palestinian leadership perhaps believe that Peres is better than Netanyahu but I believe that Peres and Netanyahu are similar and complement one another. I trust neither Netanyahu nor Peres. In my view, they are still enemies of the Palestinian people, so long as they occupy Palestinian territory. And I will continue to call them enemies because they really did not achieve anything in the peace process.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] After Yasir 'Arafat's recent illness, the question of succession to the Palestinian

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president was raised with conflicting views emerging, some calling for collective leadership, some mentioning Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], and some claiming that, constitutionally, Ahmad Quray' should be the successor. How does Abu-al-Lutf view the matter, bearing in mind that you are known to be the second man?

[Qaddumi] Fatah's experiment is different from the experiments of many movements and political parties in the Arab region.

I did not reach this post through general elections. I reached it through long years of struggle work within the Fatah Movement which put me there on behalf of the Palestinian people.... I am the one who continually submits the political report to the PNC which in 1988 chose me to be the foreign minister of the state of Palestine. I am proud of that — and I see myself as a servant of the Palestinian people with a task to perform. I must teach future generations what I have learned through this long experiment and other experiments, in order to show them the way, where we went wrong and where we were right.... I see that as the central task.

As regards the labels of first, second, or third man, I believe that my duty as Fatah secretary is one of political enlightenment, promoting political thinking, mobilizing the masses, promoting revolutionary consciousness among the Palestinian masses, promoting bonds of national unity, training successive leaderships, creating a conscious organization on sound foundations away from domination, repression, and autocracy, and inculcating democratic principles in future generations.... I am one of the teachers of the Palestinian people by virtue of my age and long experience spanning 45 years. I am one of many such teachers of the Palestinian people. I do not view power with much fancy. I see it as a means. If the authority errs I criticize it and if it acts soundly I salute it. I often apply objectivity and a scientific approach when taking a stand. As I said, I am not interested in power. A person not interested in power usually makes fewer mistakes.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] In Fatah as well as in the PLO, you have always been regarded as the second man after Yasir 'Arafat but in the latest Executive Committee list your name came after 'Arafat and Abu-Mazin. Does that mean that Abu-Mazin has taken your place?

[Qaddumi] Such matters often create sensitivity with some people — but Faruq Qaddumi does not care about such things as whether his name is mentioned at the beginning or the end. That is a formality. What matters is what a human being can offer and how he can unite the masses and all factions of the national movement. I am not sensitive about where my name is placed. Gandhi never assumed power. The first man in the government was Nehru. Some people believe that a man is judged on the basis of his position in power. I am not in the Palestinian National Authority but I respect all our brothers and at the same time I am interested in national unity and in dialogue within the national movement and within Fatah despite the differences of opinion. We want to preserve this structure and we do not want it to be divided.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you view the recent Israeli-Turkish agreement allowing Israel to use Turkish air space?

[Qaddumi] Suleyman Demirel is one of the Turkish presidents who were part of Western alliances when the entire Arab region opposed these alliances.... In his mind, Demirel still has these pro-Israeli inclinations, most regrettably. We discussed this matter at the Arab League and said that we must differentiate between Demirel's policy and the Islamic trends among the Turkish people. I salute Erbakan who says that Jerusalem is Islamic. He is Turkish, but Demirel is aligned with Israel. In the past he opposed the trend led by Ecevit. Turkey is a Middle Eastern state. Europe will never accept it because it is an Islamic state. President Demirel must grasp these facts and should remember the positions taken Sultan Abdelhamid regarding the Zionist ambitions in Palestine and Jerusalem.... We hope that these unfriendly trends in the Turkish Government will respond to the Turkish popular Islamic wish to rescue Jerusalem and Palestine.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official—Halt of Attacks Until Elections 'Expired'

TA1106150996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 11 Jun 96 p A6

[Report by Sami Soqol]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader in Gaza, told HA'ARETZ yesterday that the announcement ceasing attacks until the Israeli elections has expired, and "the situation has now returned to what it was before."

Al-Zahhar explained that the announcement on the suspension of attacks by Hamas was aimed at preventing such events from influencing the outcome of the Israeli elections and was made because the movement did not want to spur a negative reactions among Palestinians. Al-Zahhar stressed that there was no agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas on halting the attacks, but "a unilateral declaration by us."

Al-Zahhar added that he has no doubt that the cycle of violence will be resumed since "Palestinian society has

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suffered a great deal from the Israeli occupation, and when part of the population turned to negotiations with Israel, the other turned its back."

Palestinian Affairs: Sources on 'Iranian-Run Secret Military Organization'

JN1106202496 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 12 Jun 96 p 7

[Report by Taha Abu-Ridn]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli Mosad and the Palestinian security apparatus began establishing espionage networks in some Arab countries after a wave of suicide bombings against Israel and after Jordan and some other Arab countries were accused of providing a shelter for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders and some other Islamic organizations, which are a source of threat to Israel and Palestinians.

Informed Palestinian sources told AL-BILAD that Brigadier General Mahmud al-Natur, alias Abu-al-Tayyib, official in charge of the foreign security apparatus, urged President Yasir 'Arafat to open a branch for the apparatus in several Arab countries, particularly Jordan. He also suggested that the apparatus use the Palestinian Embassy in Cairo as its main headquarters to draw up a working program for 'Arafat to open branches in Jordan and Lebanon, whose large Palestinian communities can be used to put pressure on the Palestinian Authority.

The sources also said that the purpose of the establishment of the foreign security apparatus is to obtain information on movements of the Palestinian Islamic and opposition organizations in Jordan and Lebanon. These organizations, they said, have become a source of trouble for 'Arafat and Israel and that this apparatus will be equipped by Israel.

In May the Israeli Mosad and the Palestinian security organs uncovered an Iranian-run secret military organization, whose members were planning a series of operations against certain targets, including Palestinian figures from the Gaza Strip, foremost of whom is Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

Palestinian sources told AL-BILAD that the secret organization was formed in Saudi Arabia with 70 people under the leadership of Ibrahim al-Maqdamah, who lived in al-Burayj Palestinian refugee camp and who served an eight-year prison sentence in Israel. The sources do not rule out a relationship between this secret organization and those who bombed the American training center in Riyadh. The Saudi authorities learned that the perpetrators fought in Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina and that the members of that organization arrived in the Gaza Strip via Jordan carrying documents on the bombings they would carry out.

In this context, the members of the organization were divided into several cells to provide them with money, which would be transferred from Iran to a Palestinian bank in Gaza through French, U.S., and British banks.

The sources clarified that the first thing they would do was to assassinate Kamal Kuhayl, a senior Hamas activist. Hamas said it was surprised by the existence of that organization and that there was no contact with it.

Palestinian sources said they believed that Hamas' infrastructure in Gaza Strip was nearly destroyed, that the secret organization was not a faction of Hamas, and that Iran began sending instructions to the organization to carry out armed attacks against Israel and Palestinian targets in order to affect Israeli public opinion and to undermine the Middle East peace process.

In cooperation with the Israelis, the Palestinian security organs seized documents, including account numbers, addresses, computer-programmed retaliatory operations, weapons and military equipment, and many detonator devices. The Israeli Mosad and the Palestinian police did not say how these weapons and explosives were acquired by that organization.

Information available to AL-BILAD asserted that the Israeli Mosad acquainted 'Arafat personally with the secret organization, led by Ibrahim al-Maqdamah, during his recent meeting with former Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas, Fatah Group Said Planning Attacks on Settlers

TA1206101796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 12 Jun 96 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli security sources have expressed the assessment that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has succeeded in reaching an understanding with al-Shabibah [Fatah youth movement], according to which both organizations will cooperate in carrying out terrorist attacks against settlers in the territories if the new government pursues a policy of renewed settlement activity. Al-Shabibah, which belongs to Fatah, is part of the opposition to Yasir 'Arafat from within PLO ranks.

In recent months, Hamas and al-Shabibah have drawn closer and security sources believe that the two groups may have already signed a draft agreement on cooperation. The sources said that both organizations subscribe to the view that the only way to prevent either

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the establishment of new Israeli settlements or the expansion of existing ones is by perpetrating terrorist attacks against settlers. The understanding will enable al-Shabibah operatives to carry out attacks under the umbrella of Hamas.

The security sources estimated that Hamas and al-Shabibah operatives believe that the Israeli public takes a less grave view of attacks against settlers than of terrorist strikes directed against soldiers. Both organizations think that the Palestinian Authority [PA] will react less forcefully — and may even refrain from any reaction — if the attacks are directed against settlers and not against soldiers.

The security sources expect these two organizations to begin terrorist activities within the near future, if the Netanyahu government builds new settlements or expands existing ones. It seems that the two groups will focus on shooting attacks.

The sources also opined that most of the attacks will take place in Area B locations, which according to the agreements with the PA are under Israel's security responsibility despite the presence of Palestinian policemen. The sources estimated that Hamas and al-Shabibah will prefer not to operate from areas where the Palestinians have sole responsibility for security. This, so as not to embarrass the PA.

Al-Shabibah received great acclaim during the intifadah and was one of the groups that led the uprising. At internal meetings of the PLO leadership, the movement's leaders have expressed dissatisfaction with the agreements 'Arafat signed with Israel but have so far been careful to avoid any direct or overt confrontation with the PA chairman. Some of the movement's candidates were elected to the Palestinian Council in the recent elections.

Over the past two years, al-Shabibah activists have almost completely abandoned terrorist activity while focusing on bolstering their movement's status in the Palestinian political arena by holding numerous rallies and gatherings. Nevertheless, the Israeli defense establishment believes that a hard core of al-Shabibah activists maintain regular contacts with Hamas.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Likud Figure, PA's al-Husayni Hold 'First' Meeting

TA1106190596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1730 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Studio talk between anchorman Hayim Yavin and political correspondent Nisim Mish'al — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yavin] Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo met today with Faysal al-Husayni, the Palestinian Authority's [PA] official in charge of Jerusalem affairs. This is the first meeting of its kind between a senior Likud figure and a Palestinian official since the elections. Our correspondent Nisim Mish'al is in our Tel Aviv studio. Good evening, Nisim.

[Mish'al] Good evening.

[Yavin] The meeting probably did not take place at Orient House but at Tel Aviv City Hall. Who initiated it? What were the circumstances? Did the Likud leader approve it?

[Mish'al] The meeting was initiated by al-Husayni, who actually came to Milo and simply told him: We are trying to find a path to Likud people who are close to Binyamin Netanyahu and who may serve as a bridge to him. Due to his moderate positions and views, Milo is certainly seen by the PA as a bridge to Netanyahu. Incidentally, the search for such bridges are not only being conducted in Israel but also abroad, by Jews who support Netanyahu. In other words, the PA is trying to reach a close proximity which may influence Netanyahu.

[Yavin] Was Milo's move approved by the prime minister-elect?

[Mish'al] Milo reported al-Husayni's initiative to Likud leader Netanyahu, and I suppose he also briefed him about the meeting. What Milo actually told al-Husayni was: I spoke with Netanyahu before I issued my call in support of the Likud, and he told me that he intends to pursue the peace process and I am sure this is what will happen. In other words, Milo's message to al-Husayni was that he believes the Likud will pursue the peace process.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that this was not a political meeting. The two men did not discuss any matters of substance, seeing as Milo is the mayor of Tel Aviv. The importance of the meeting lies in the very fact that it was held. It was symbolic, in the sense that this was actually the first time that a senior Likud figure like Milo met a Palestinian like al-Husayni.

[Yavin] I would like to remind you that on numerous occasions before the elections Jerusalem Mayor

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Ehud Olmert said he would agree to meet al-Husayni at Jerusalem's City Hall, of course, but those were different times.

[Mish'al] Therein lies the difference. I assume that al-Husayni does not want to divide Tel Aviv or regard it as the capital of Palestine. He was prepared to come to Milo's office, but he definitely has a big problem coming to Olmert's office.

[Yavin] Let us look at al-Husayni's comments after the meeting.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] We have learned that you met with Mr. Roni Milo and relayed messages through him to Mr. Binyamin Netanyahu.

[Al-Husayni] We had a very good meeting this morning.

[Correspondent] What did you discuss?

[Al-Husayni] The need to inform people in the Likud that we must get to know each other seeing that, as you know, since the time of Moshe 'Amirav there has been no dialogue with the Likud.

[Correspondent] So, this is actually the first formal dialogue between Likud members and PA officials.

[Al-Husayni] I hope this will not just be a formal dialogue. I would like to see Palestinian people sitting with people on the other side. [end recording]

[Yavin] To sum up, what can be learned from this meeting and the talk between Dore Gold and Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] about Netanyahu's policy vis-a-vis the PA?

[Mish'al] If we accept it at face value, then Netanyahu intends to pursue the talks and the peace process with the Palestinians. Dore Gold would not have spoken to Abu-Mazin of his own volition, and I assume that if Netanyahu had not wanted Milo to confer with al-Husayni he would have told him as much, but he did not. He knew about the meeting and I suppose he approved of it. Therefore, my simple conclusion is that Netanyahu will pursue the process. Nevertheless, attention should be paid to what al-Husayni said, that the purpose of the meeting was to break the ice and change perceptions.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Likud's Milo Says Jerusalem Not Discussed With al-Husayni

TA1206064196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo says that, having heard from Faysal al-Husayni yesterday of the Palestinians' desire to hold a dialogue, he is in favor of one. Interviewed by Qol Yisra'el this morning, Roni Milo said his meeting with Faysal al-Husayni was not held at the behest of Binyamin Netanyahu, who may have known nothing of it. Before he agreed to meet with al-Husayni, however, he consulted with Netanyahu's political adviser Dore Gold. Milo noted that he assumed political advisers consult with their superiors as a rule.

He revealed that the Jerusalem and Orient House issues were not brought up at the meeting.

Arab-Israeli Talks: PA's al-Husayni Denies 'Preliminary' Contacts With Likud Bloc

JN1106195696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, PLO Executive Committee member and official in charge of the Jerusalem file, denied that the Palestinian Authority [PA] held preliminary contacts with the ruling Likud bloc. In statements to our correspondent in the holy city after meeting with foreign consuls in Orient House, al-Husayni said the only contact between Palestine and Israel in this regard was in 1987, which at the time resulted in stripping (Moshe 'Amiram), a prominent member of the Likud bloc, of his membership in the bloc.

Al-Husayni said the Palestinian side is ready to hold contacts with Likud not because it won in the elections but because of its new responsibilities which stipulate that it hold talks with representatives of the Palestinian people. Al-Husayni warned against any extremist measures that the Israeli Government might take in Jerusalem. He said: Any attempt to bring matters to a confrontation will create new confrontations. He hoped that the Israeli Government will be wise and responsible.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Likud's Milo Says Netanyahu Should Meet 'Arafat To Prove Intent

TA1206104696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo says that if the new government intends to pursue the political process seriously, Netanyahu will eventually have to meet with 'Arafat. Milo stressed that his meeting with Faysal al-Husayni was not held at the behest of Netanyahu, although it did happen with the knowledge of Netanyahu political adviser Dore Gold. Milo said the meeting was a signal to the Palestinians that all doors and all options were open.

Newly elected Likud Knesset Member [and former Shin Bet deputy chief] Gid'on Ezra' told our correspondent this morning that Prime Minister-designate Netanyahu approved the meeting with al-Husayni in order to hear

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him out, but he had not instructed Milo to hold the meeting. Ezra' stressed that the Palestinians must realize that dialogue is difficult with terrorist squads looming in the background.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Palestinian, Israeli Officials Discuss Safe Corridor

JN1106203296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, official in charge of the Palestinian security committee for negotiations with Israel, had a meeting with (Peres Gidar), head of the Israeli liaison committee, in Tel Aviv this evening. The two officials discussed the draft protocol on the safe corridor linking the Palestinian governorates in the West Bank and Gaza.

In a statement to our radio, Maj. Gen. al-Yahya said they reviewed some of the articles related to the protocol, which will be presented in its final form next week for ratification by the Palestinian and Israeli sides. He noted that an agreement was reached on the major points related to the corridor.

Maj. Gen. al-Yahya said Palestinian citizens will have a safe passage from Bayt Hanun crossing point to Tarqumiya area in Hebron governorate. Another road will extend from Bayt Hanun to Ramallah area, he added.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Decision on Safe Corridor Hinges on New Israeli Cabinet

TA1206064796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli and Palestinian officials yesterday discussed the operation of a safe corridor between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya, the chief Palestinian delegate, said that a final document on the matter can be signed next week. Israeli defense sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the safe corridor will begin to operate only if the new government issues specific orders on the matter.

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Algeria

Algeria: Islamic Groups Withdraw Support From GIA Leadership

MM1006145896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 10 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil in London: "Islamic Groups and Leaders Withdraw Support From the Algerian 'Group'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab Islamic groups and leaderships have withdrawn their support from the current Algerian Armed Islamic Group [GIA] leadership. In separate statements, some of which were issued in London and others outside Britain, copies of which were obtained by AL-HAYAH, the Egyptian "Jihad Group" led by Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Libyan Militant Islamic Group led by Abu-Abdallah al-Sadiq, the Palestinian Shaykh Abu-Qatadah, and 'Umar 'Abd-al-Hakim (the Syrian Abu-Mus'ab) said that Abou Abderrahmane Amin's (Djemal Zitouni's) leadership is guilty of "serious doctrinal deviations" and thus it was necessary to withdraw support from it.

These positions are the second hardest blow received by the GIA since the end of last year, when several armed groups broke away from its leadership because Zitouni claimed responsibility for killing several Muslim preachers such as Shaykh Mohamed Said and Shaykh Abderrezak Redjam, two Islamic Salvation Front leaders, in May 1994 under the rule of its former amir, Abou Abdallah Ahmed (Cherif Gouasimi).

The announcement of the positions of the Egyptian and Libyan groups and the Islamic Syrian and Palestinian militants, coincided with the failure of the AL-ANSAR bulletin to publish its latest issue, due last Friday [7 June]. It is not known why the bulletin, which is close to the GIA, was not issued, whether this is a temporary or permanent interruption, and whether it is due to a disagreement with the GIA in Algeria. With the withdrawal of support by the two groups and shaykhs from Djemal Zitouni's leadership, the latter has become isolated abroad after being isolated at home. Critics believe that, under his rule, the GIA resorted to fighting the other Islamic groups which do not come under the GIA's banner, instead of fighting the Algerian security forces. Also, some blame him for actions which contravene Islamic law, such as the killing of Shaykhs Said and Redjam (eight months after their killing, Zitouni has still not produced the evidence that he promised would convict the two men of plotting a coup against him).

It seems that the positions of Abu-Qatadah, Abu-Mus'ab, the [Egyptian] Jihad, and the [Libyan] Militant [Islamic] Group were coordinated in advance, since all four statements were dated 6 June, which was the date AL-ANSAR should have been issued, and included criticism of Abou Abderrahmane's leadership but not of the Algerian "Jihad."

Egypt

Egypt: Al-Baz Discusses Summit, Arab Issues, Relations With Sudan

NC1106182696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1540 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stated that the talks between President Husni Mubarak and Sultan Qabus of Oman today dealt with the situation in the entire Arab region, current developments, and the issues that will be placed on the agenda of the forthcoming Arab summit scheduled to be held 22-23 June.

Asked if the Arab summit will discuss certain measures against Israel should it change the foundations of the Madrid Conference, such as canceling or slowing down the normalization process, Dr. al-Baz said: We are not going to discuss hasty actions and we do not want to infringe upon the peace process. He added that such talk is out of place now because we are now discussing strengthening the peace process and setting down Israel's responsibilities.

On comments in Israel describing the Arab summit as muscle-flexing and as opposed to the peace process, Dr. al-Baz said let them say what they want. We will discuss our views and the stand we want to take, namely, to keep the door open to every party to fulfill its obligations and honor its pledges. He said Israel had pledged to resume the negotiations with all Arab parties through the bilateral tracks in accordance with specific terms of reference, and Israel has no right to change these terms or the nature of the negotiation process.

Asked what would be done if Israel fails to meet its obligations, Dr. al-Baz said that everything will be discussed at the proper time. However, we will not now resort to threats and say if they do not do this we will do that. He added: We do not think now that they will not fulfill their obligations and pledges.

Asked if there are contacts with the Iraqi Government, which has objected at not being invited to the summit, Dr. al-Baz said that we have not received any news in this respect; what we heard were media reports. We hope that the Iraqi Government will show understanding of the reasons for its absence from the summit. He

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stressed that it is important to improve the situation, circumstances, and atmosphere of Arab relations to bolster Arab solidarity. He said that we are looking forward to seeing greater Arab solidarity than mere official steps here or there.

Asked about ways to achieve Arab solidarity without Iraq, Dr. al-Baz said: We cannot sidestep the fact that there are certain objections to Iraq's attending the summit; naturally, we are not talking of the Iraqi people but of official attendance by Iraq. He said that there are still objections to Iraq's official attendance; we hope that this situation will improve in the near future and that these objections will cease.

Asked if President Mubarak and Sultan Qabus discussed Arab reconciliation at today's summit and if Egypt is ready for reconciliation with Sudan now that it has declared its readiness to participate in the summit, Dr. al-Baz said that President Mubarak and Sultan Qabus discussed all issues relating to the situation in the Arab world, including requirements for bolstering Arab solidarity among the various Arab countries so that the Arab front will be strong and cohesive. He stressed that the question is not how the Arab nation should deal with the change that occurred in Israel or the change in the Israeli stance, because the Arab summit involves broader issues. He noted that the challenges facing the summit and its hoped for results go far beyond the existence of a new government in Israel, particularly since the stance of the Israeli Government has not yet become clear. He said that there are certain indications, some of which are negative, but these are not enough to jump to certain conclusions. He noted that a large number of Arab leaders have consistently called for Arab summits because there are far greater challenges. He said that if the challenges arise from the Israeli stance and the possibilities of a change in this position, these issues will be discussed quietly, objectively, rationally, and free from threats.

Dr. al-Baz stressed that there is no armed conflict between us and the Sudanese people, but there are differences arising from the stand adopted by the Sudanese government or regime. These stands, which are documented, infringe on Arab national security on several levels. He noted that these differences between us and Sudan are superseded by the invitation to Sudan to attend the Arab summit, because extending an invitation means that Egypt believes that Sudan can exercise its rights and that our objections to Sudan can remain on the bilateral level. He noted that Sudan is vulnerable to certain sanctions by the Security Council because it failed to obey its resolutions and did not cooperate with the Ethiopian agencies' investigation of the attempt on President Mubarak and the accompanying Egyptian delegation at the Addis Ababa summit. He pointed out that this point of disagreement will remain and Sudan will be required to account for it. He said that Sudan will be invited according to the normal procedures for holding summit conferences.

Asked if President Mubarak and Sultan Qabus discussed Iranian-Gulf relations, Dr. al-Baz said that this issue was discussed in general.

Regarding the level of attendance at the Arab summit, Dr. al-Baz said that the signs indicate that the representation will be very high and that the Cairo summit will be attended by one of the largest numbers of Arab kings and presidents ever.

Dr. al-Baz added that the two major issues before the summit are the strengthening of coordination, cooperation, and solidarity between all the Arab countries with the aim of reaching a strong Arab stand on the existing challenges; and second, to assess the peace process and where it now stands in order to take a united Arab stand that ensures the continuation of the peace process in accordance with the established terms of reference and what was decided by the international community and accepted by the two sides.

Asked about U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's call to the Arab summit to leave the door to peace open, al-Baz said: We are leaving the door to peace open because peace is an Arab proposal. We have never dithered or hesitated in reiterating at all times that from the Arab viewpoint peace is a strategic goal, not a tactical matter. We have never closed the door to peace.

In reply to a question on whether the return to the Arab summit formula negates the Damascus Declaration, particularly as the latter proved to be ineffectual in past years, Dr. al-Baz said: The summit does not negate the Damascus Declaration or the need for it. It only expands the scope of Arab action in order to deepen solidarity. He added: That has been our demand. When the Damascus Declaration group was set up, there was absolutely no thought of moving away from the greater Arab circle but of creating a nucleus that could find a large measure of cooperation in the economic and security spheres.

Asked if Sultan Qabus will attend the summit, al-Baz said: We are proud of the role played by the Sultanate of Oman and hope its attendance will be at this high level.

He added: We know that Sultan Qabus attributes great importance to the issue of Arab solidarity and the discussion of the future of peace in the region. He also has special admiration for Egypt and its leadership.

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Asked about claims that the Arabs are always meeting but the only results are mere words, al-Baz said: Everyone will see for certain that no hollow words will come out of this summit and that it will produce a united Arab concept. This concept will focus on two issues: The first is the backing for Arab solidarity and coordination, and the second is the peace process, about which we will make our view known and stress its continuation on the bases of the UN and the Madrid conference resolutions.

Al-Baz went on to say: We are determined that the goal of this summit will not be just to issue recommendations, but also to come out with a follow up mechanism. It should be clear that we are not meeting to stand against a people or make threats. We will keep open minds and have hope.

He added that the Arab leaders will formulate a way to deal with the international blocs in order to protect Arab economic interests, stressing that the issues before this summit will not be limited but will go beyond issuing recommendations.

Egypt: Foreign Ministry Official Previews Arab Summit Agenda

NC1206061996 Cairo MENA in English
2000 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—Assistant Foreign Minister for International Relations Ambassador Sa'id Qasim al-Masri said the ad hoc committee, formed by the ministry under Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa to prepare for the pan-Arab summit, is bent on drafting Egyptian papers to be tabled before the Arab leaders for examination during the summit.

In the statements he made here today, the Foreign Ministry official said the summit agenda features two main items, first to rally Arab ranks and second to maintain the peace march.

All the Egyptian papers center on these two themes, he noted. All issues that concern common Arab action and Arab solidarity will be probed and the different hurdles in the political and economic fields will be removed, al—Masri said.

The Foreign Ministry official said the second main topic on the agenda of the summit is the peace march, which will be examined from an Arab perspective in the light of the developments on the Israeli scene. There is no deviation from the Arab constant commitment to the bases upon which a just and comprehensive peace can be established, especially UN Resolutions 242, 338 and 425 and the land for peace swap, the Madrid peace conference and the negotiations on all tracks, he stressed.

We can not stop halfway to start anew on new bases while the final-status talks started on the Palestinian track, al-Masri said. Staging new bases is entirely rejected, he underlined, saying that the summit will dwell on this point.

Egypt: Foreign Ministry 'Source' Previews Summit Resolutions

NC1106202696 Cairo MENA in English
1929 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—The pan-Arab summit that will open here on June 21 will issue resolutions to close the Arab ranks and iron out obstacles facing the realization of common Arab action in the political and economic domains in order to enhance inter-Arab cooperation, an informed source at the Foreign Ministry said.

The summit will also pass resolutions that are aimed at maintaining the peace process and pushing it forward, the source added in statements here this evening, stressing that the Arab countries are keen on the creation of mechanisms to follow up and guarantee the implementation of these resolutions.

This is the summit of Arab solidarity structuring and completion, the source noted.

Egypt: Papers Claim Cairo Summit Success Before Being Held

NC1206063296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0606 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 12 Jun (MENA)—AL-JUMHURIYAH and AL-AKHBAR say the immediate response to the call by President Husni Mubarak to convene an expanded Arab summit in Cairo reflects the Arabs' desire to overcome the differences the Arab nation has suffered since the Gulf war.

AL-JUMHURIYAH says in its comment today that the comprehensive and immediate welcome for this summit will undoubtedly create positive reactions among regional and international forces. These forces will understand how serious the Arab sides are about establishing a balanced, just, and comprehensive peace in the region.

AL-JUMHURIYAH adds: Since the Cairo summit has received this kind of attention simply through the announcement of the call for it, preparations for the summit must show the same level of effort and importance.

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AL-JUMHURIYAH asks that the summit realize the Arab nation's ambitions and overcome its past differences.

AL-AKHBAR says: We would not be exaggerating our optimism when we claim that the Arab summit has succeeded even before it has been held through the great and solid Arab response to the call to convene it. The evidence for this success lies in the confusion prevailing over ruling political circles in Israel from which statements have been issued that are neither rational nor sensible in response to this successful Egyptian call.

AL-AKHBAR adds: The more heated the Israeli statements the greater the Arabs' conviction that their move to convene a summit is correct — a move to which Egypt has long aspired to unite the Arabs on a single stance.

Egypt: Minister Comments on Mubarak Meeting With Oman's Qabus

NC1106151696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has stated that the talks between President Husni Mubarak and Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman dealt with the Arab situation, efforts to close Arab ranks, the current arrangements to hold the Arab summit, and the main issues of concern at the forthcoming Arab summit that will be held in Cairo on 21-23 June.

Al-Sharif said that leaders Mubarak and Qabus exchanged views on these issues and the prospects of Middle East issues and the peace prospects on the various tracks amidst Arab solidarity and an integrated Arab concept. The talks also dealt with certain topics and issues of common concern in the international arena, issues that were also discussed at the tripartite summit in Damascus. They also reviewed the results of the tripartite summit and of the al-'Aqabah summit held last week.

Al-Sharif said that certain bilateral issues were left to the ministers of the two countries. He said that the Egyptian and Omani delegations held several meetings on the sidelines of the summit, noting that the ministers of health, information, and ministers concerned with investment, financial, and economic aspects discussed relevant issues. He noted that these meetings were successful and that views between leaders Mubarak and Qabus were identical. He stressed that ties between President Mubarak and Sultan Qabus are strong and are built on firm foundations and reflect the constant principles that link the two countries and fraternal peoples. He said that the meeting will serve the Arab nation and the Egyptian and Omani peoples.

Egypt: Mubarak, Sultan of Oman Resume Talks Over Dinner

NC1106202496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1915 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak held a session of talks with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman in the Presidential Palace in 'Abidin this evening.

The talks between the two leaders focused on ways to unify the Arab fold and achieve Arab solidarity, developments in the peace process after Israeli elections, and coordination among Arab leaders for the success of the Arab summit expected to be held 21-23 June. The talks also focused on Egyptian-Omani ties and promoting them in all spheres.

President Mubarak and Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id resumed their talks over a dinner hosted by President Mubarak in honor of Sultan Qabus and his delegation in the Presidential Palace in 'Abidin.

The dinner was attended by the official delegation accompanying Sultan Qabus and a number of ministers and senior Egyptian officials.

Egypt: Visiting Omani Official Discusses Ties, Peace Process

NC1206133996 Cairo MENA in English 1114 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Cairo, June 12 (MENA)—The current visit to Egypt by Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman comes within the context of the common work between the two countries and coordination of stances, Omani Information Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rawwas said in an interview with "Good Morning Egypt" program this morning. [passage omitted]

On President Husni Mubarak's ongoing efforts to unify Arab ranks, the Omani official made it clear that the Cairo Arab summit is regarded as the biggest gathering where the Arabs meet in a bid to realize the aspired for goals and to overcome obstacles hindering inter-Arab cooperation and investment in Arab resources.

The Omani minister of information expounded that since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, huge burdens were laid down on Arab solidarity and cooperation. He voiced belief that the Cairo Arab summit would focus on building confidence among the Arab leaders and peoples.

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On the Mideast peace process, the Omani official made it clear that all peoples support this march which is based on the land-for-peace principle. He referred to the current changes inside Israel.

Al-Rawwas voiced hope that the new Israeli government would abide by all rules and agreements it signed with the Palestinian side and other Arab sister countries. A just and comprehensive peace could only be achieved through Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, he added.

Oman will [take] part in the upcoming Cairo summit with a high-level delegation, he said.

Egypt: Military Talks With PRC Begin; Protocol Signed

NC1106131896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Military talks began between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the PRC delegations at the Defense Ministry today. Field Marshal Husayn Tantawi, commander in chief of the Armed Forces and minister of defense and war production, headed the Egyptian side; and PRC Defense Minister Chi Hoatian headed the PRC side. Also attending the meeting on the Egyptian side were Lieutenant General Majdi Hatatah, chief of staff of the armed forces; commanders of the main branches of the armed forces; and a number of senior commanders. On the PRC side, the meeting was attended by members of the delegation accompanying the PRC defense minister and the PRC ambassador in Cairo. The talks focused on topics of common concern. The two delegations reviewed military relations and ways of promoting bilateral military cooperation between their armed forces. They also signed a military cooperation protocol. Under the protocol, the PRC People's Liberation Army made a donation to finance some types that will be defined by the Egyptian armed forces. [sentence as received] The protocol was signed by the heads of the armament committees of the two parties.

Egypt: Security Forces Kill 2 'Most Dangerous' Terrorists

NC1106161396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1510 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Suhaj, 11 Jun (MENA)—The State Security Intelligence forces today succeeded in eliminating two of the most dangerous and active terrorists and captured seven others during a raid on a hideout near al-Aghanah area in Markaz Tima in Suhaj. Stating this, a responsible security source added that one terrorist, Jamal 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Abd-al-Nasir, had been at large for four years and was charged in 30 terrorist cases. He was killed during a clash with the security force today. Terrorist Husayn Isma'il Ahmad, who was in charge of communications among terrorist organizations in Upper Egypt, was also killed. The forces found them in possession of an automatic weapon, a revolver, and bullets. The prosecution office has been notified to investigate.

The source said that the intelligence service received information that the military wing of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah in Upper Egypt led by terrorist Jamal 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Abd-al-Nasir had began moves to form new armed terrorist groups in some cities and villages north of the Asyut Governorate and task them with escalating hostile operations against political and security leaders. The source noted that these hostile operations included recruiting and assembling some terrorists who are unknown to the security agencies to train them on the use of firearms and combat methods and send them on reconnaissance missions in the Cairo and al-Jizah governorates to monitor movements of public political and security personalities and collect automatic weapons, ammunition, and revolvers. The source added that the security agencies are continuing the search and raids of the remaining hideouts of the terrorists and arresting them for prosecution.

Egypt: 2 Policemen Killed in Shoot-Out With 'Terrorists'

NC1106201196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1920 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—Two policemen were martyred this morning when they tried to stop a car carrying terrorists in the Suq al-'Arba'in area in al-Suways. Two passersby were also wounded during the chase.

A responsible security source at the Interior Ministry said police Noncommissioned Officer Muhammad Mahmud 'Ali and assistant Sa'id Ibrahim Fathallah from the al-Suways traffic police force spotted in that area a car matching previously issued details. As they tried to stop the car, its occupants fired random shots killing the two policemen.

Citizens Rajab 'Abd-al-Razzaq and Walid Yusuf Mahmud were injured when the car hit them as the occupants tried to escape. They were taken to hospital for treatment.

The security forces followed their escape route and cordoned off roads they might use, but the culprits managed to flee in another car.

Detective and criminal laboratory officials are examining the car found in Wadi Hawf. Security reports in-

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dicted that the culprits abandoned the car because some of them were hit.

Minister of Interior Hasan al-Alfi issued a decree promoting the two martyrs posthumously and giving them immediate financial rewards in appreciation of their distinguished security role.

Egypt: Press Syndicate Council Members Submit Resignations

NC1006134096 Cairo MENA in English 1230 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, June 10 (MENA)—Members of the Press Syndicate Council today tendered their resignations to Press Syndicate Chairman Ibrahim Nafi'. The 12 members of the Press Syndicate Council told Nafi' that they tendered their resignations "because the council has failed to introduce what the journalists wanted to include in the draft press law."

Nafi' decided to refer the resignations to the General Assembly of the Press Syndicate, which is scheduled to hold an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday [12 June]. Following their celebration of pressmen day today, journalists began a symbolic sit-in strike this afternoon as a protest against non-acceptance of amendments which were proposed by journalists to be included in the draft press law.

The Press Syndicate Council had held a meeting today under Press Syndicate Chairman Ibrahim Nafi' following the celebration of pressmen day. The council issued a statement following the meeting saying that members of the Press Syndicate Council had tendered their resignations and gave reasons for their resignations.

Press Syndicate Chairman Ibrahim Nafi' decided to defer a decision on these resignations until the General Assembly of the Press Syndicate holds its extraordinary meeting on Wednesday. Nafi' asked members of the Press Syndicate Council to continue their work until the General Assembly met.

Egypt: Rights Group Calls Government 'Inflexible' on Press Law

NC1106154696 Paris AFP in English 1450 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, June 11 (AFP) — A human rights group accused the Egyptian government on Tuesday [11 June] of increasing tension between journalists and the state through its "inflexibility" in changing a controversial press law.

The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) said the government "has ignored demands made by human rights organizations, political parties and the Press Syndicate" to annul the year-old law on libel.

"The government's inflexible stand has increased the intensity of the confrontation between journalists and the government," the EOHR said in a statement received by AFP.

Parliament is now considering a draft law which is meant to replace the controversial legislation which imposes jail terms of up to 15 years for defamation.

But journalists have complained the draft bill "does not meet even the minimum standards" demanded by the union to change the current legislation, which they say will limit criticism of the government.

The 12-member executive board of the journalists union submitted a mass resignation on Monday to protest a draft law now before [incomplete sentence as received].

"The government appears determined not to change" its stance on the law, which it "expects to pass without amendment and without consideration of the journalists' demands," the EOHR said.

The EOHR called on President Husni Mubarak to intervene and amend the new legislation "to conform with the legitimate demands of journalists."

According to the Human Rights Legal Aid Centre, the new bill cuts the maximum sentence for defamation but increases penalties for 22 other offences which are often vaguely defined.

It notably calls for five years imprisonment for "inciting a coup d'etat, hatred of the regime or spreading doctrines aimed at modifying the principles of the constitution."

A journalist can be jailed for up to three years for "publishing pictures harmful to the country's reputation" and for one year for "insulting an official in the course of his duties, or insulting parliament or official bodies."

Egypt: Press Syndicate Chairman Nafi' Submits Resignation

NC1206131396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1150 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 12 Jun (MENA)—Press Syndicate Chairman Ibrahim Nafi' today tendered his resignation to the General Assembly of the Press Syndicate. In a statement he said: I declare that I am joining my colleagues, members of the Press Syndicate Council, in submitting my resignation as chairman of the Press Syndicate. The resignations of all members and the reasons for the resignations will be submitted to the extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly

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proposed for Wednesday 19 June if the law organizing the press is issued and the General Assembly sees that it does not fulfill the demands of the pressmen. He said the issue is being left to the Syndicate Council. He added: I and members of the Press Syndicate Council trust that its decision will express the interests of the pressmen.

Egypt: Minister Cited on Gas, Oil, Petrochemicals Projects

NC1106202596 Cairo MENA in English 1904 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 11 Jun (MENA)—Petroleum Minister Hamdi al-Banbi today said his ministry is finalizing an assessment of an ethylene production project in the western desert, estimating that up to 300,000 tonnes instead of 150,000 tonnes of the gas will be produced yearly.

This came in a speech he made before the Shura (advisory) Council [Consultative Council], which held a session to discuss a report on petrochemicals prepared by the industry committee.

The drive for the petrochemicals industry in Egypt is basically targeting local consumption, he said. He added that the government is encouraging the Egyptian, Arab and foreign private sectors to get engaged in oil-related enterprises here.

A number of projects will be launched in the western desert with the aim of increasing the output of oil fields there with a total value of approximately 775,000 dollars. Three international companies will contribute to financing these undertakings, he added.

Egypt: U.S. Criticized for Proposing Peres as UN Secretary General

NC1106165296 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 3 Jun 96 p 16

[From the "Dividing Lines" column by Samir Rajab]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is undoubtedly "demonic" thinking on the part of the United States to seek to appoint Israeli former prime minister Shim'on Peres as successor to Dr. Butrus-Ghali as UN secretary general.

I say it is "demonic" thinking for several reasons:

1. It ensures that Clinton will take the most Jewish votes in his next election battle. It goes without saying that these Jews, wherever they are, will be pleased to see one of them appointed to this high position.

2. It deprives the Arabs of the opportunity to again hold such an important and unique international position.

3. It punishes Dr. Butrus-Ghali, who dared to publish the "Qana" report, which included shameful facts and information about the massacre perpetrated by Israel in south Lebanon.

4. It affirms that the United Nations will forever remain under the hegemony of the United States, which manages its internal and foreign affairs as it likes. Washington will thus be sending the message to all parties everywhere.

5. It compensates Shim'on Peres materially and morally for his loss, particularly as the United States gambled on him and repeatedly told him he would win. But facts showed that its calculations were wrong.

Regrettably, they think that it is too much for the Arabs to have anything, as if an Egyptian, a Syrian, or an Algerian holding any position is like a thorn in their side. Hence, they wait for an opportunity to fall upon him and remove him by any way or means.

It must be said that Dr. Butrus-Ghali has tried to do all he could throughout his tenure as UN secretary general, but he has been unable to do more than he has in this "polluted" environment inside an "organization" suffering from "bankruptcy" and amid schemes and plots by several elements ultimately manipulated by "Washington."

Whether they bring in Peres or someone else, he will not be able to achieve "miracles." All he can do is to be a pliant tool in the hands of the "permanent masters," write down whatever they dictate, say whatever serves their desires and whims, applaud them, and bless any Israeli aggression against the Arabs, now and in the future.

Dear "Washington." What is happening is a disgrace, a thousand disgraces. Yes, you are proud of your unquestioning support for Israel, whether under the Labor or the Likud Parties, and you do not deny your commitment to its superiority over its Arab neighbors.

But, I believe and think that it is not appropriate for your stand to be so "blatant."

Egypt: Columnist Views Clinton's Reaction to Netanyahu Victory

NC1106170596 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 5 Jun 96 p 12

[From "Our Foreign Policy" column by Muhammad Sayyid Ahmad: "Netanyahu and Clinton"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab circles have accused the Clinton administration of being the most biased U.S. Administration toward Israel. This administration

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defended itself by claiming it was not biased toward Israel, but was biased toward the Israel of Peres against the Israel of Netanyahu, that is, toward the Israel that advocates peace against the Israel that is against it and that is putting obstacles in its path. With this argument, the Clinton administration wanted to appear as the international mediator that gives precedence to the "peace process" and not to Israel and that this policy is in the interest of both the Arab parties and Israel.

But Netanyahu won while Peres lost and Clinton must face U.S. presidential elections in a few months. He does not want to lose the Jewish vote in the United States so he hastened to congratulate Netanyahu as soon as he was elected and to stress the strength of U.S.-Israeli relations. In the first telephone call between the two leaders, Clinton did not mention the "peace process" at all.

Thus it appears that from Clinton's view U.S.-Israeli relations are governed more by his success in the coming U.S. elections than by the success of the "peace process" in the Middle East. This ultimately means making the Arab regimes supporting the "peace process" shoulder the burden of convincing the Arab peoples that the process is continuing and that Netanyahu must be given a chance to formulate his policies after assuming power and must therefore define his stances on Israel's international commitments, not merely fulfill his promises to the Israeli voter.

This means giving the Arab regimes supporting the "peace process", primarily Egypt, the task of convincing Syria that the peace process is continuing despite Netanyahu's clear and categorical announcement that he will absolutely not return the Golan to it and convincing the Palestinian Authority that the process is continuing despite Netanyahu's assertions that he will never recognize Palestinian sovereignty or a Palestinian state, that Jerusalem will forever remain Israel's capital [illegible]ne, and that he is determined to review the terms of the Oslo agreement, which he believes harm Israel's security.

We must also realize that Netanyahu succeeded as a result of the Israeli voter's "rebellion" against a U.S. policy adopted by Clinton, a policy that supported one side against the other and hence tried to impose its custodianship on Israel's policies. Netanyahu, who won as a result of this "rebellion," is bound to continue with it. The more ministers who are determined to challenge the "peace process" he chooses the stronger his negotiating card and the more he will force the others to yield to his conditions, because Israel is the only party that cannot be dispensed with in the "peace process."

We should read the headline in a British paper when the election results became known: "Is Igal Amir, Rabin's killer, the winner?"

It might be said that both Clinton and Netanyahu belong to a new generation of politicians born after WWII. But is age alone capable of providing the means for finding a way out of the current deadlock in the "peace process," something that suggests the Labor Party had one "task," namely, to strip the Arab parties of their caution and vigilance over Israel so that the Likud could come and finish them off completely?!

Egypt: Editor Criticizes Iran, 'Hostile' Schemes Against Arabs

NC1106110496 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 5 Jun 96 p 1

[Article by Chief Editor Jalal Duwaydar: "The Schemes of the Peacock Throne Against Arabs Will Not Stop"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Judging by current developments and events in the Middle East, it is perfectly clear there is no difference between Iran's mullahs and Israel in terms of their conduct and attitude toward Middle East security and stability. The only difference is that Iran raises the slogan of Islam, which is innocent of all its practices and should have restrained its schemes and attempts to dominate the Muslim Arab region, while Jewish Israel raises the slogan of Zionism, which adopts the same principles as Iran. Nothing proves this bitter fact better than the abortive coup attempt in Bahrain the day before yesterday. Investigations revealed that Iranian agents calling themselves Bahraini Hizballah engineered and carried out the attempt.

Being part of a series of Iranian intrigues, this conspiracy confirms what I pointed to in last Monday's [3 June] article under the headline "Encroaching on Lebanon's Sovereignty and the Mullahs' Interference." In that article, I referred to the Iranian regime's insistence on violating the sovereignty of an Arab state, Lebanon, by recruiting agents and opening the door to interference in Lebanese affairs.

This hostile goal is the same as that which prompted the rulers of the Peacock throne to occupy the three islands of the United Arab Emirates, as I said in my article.

Acting on the maxim that the "means justify the end," the mullahs had no objection to allying with terrorist groups, by financing and harboring terrorists, to trigger disturbances and chaos and destabilize the region.

Seeing the major obstacle hindering their Persian fancies in Egypt, they invested money and applied pressure by allying with al-Turabi's followers in Khartoum against

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it, imagining that they could obstruct its pioneering political role and affect its economic reform march. With that destructive scheme aborted, they started to make contacts, claiming a desire to improve relations with Egypt. They were hoping to find a chance to establish a kind of presence on Egyptian soil, which, to them, is the most suitable springboard for their destructive enterprises. Unfortunately for them that the Egyptian political leadership has been vigilant to this suspicious role from the outset. It suspected every Iranian move and the contradictory positions of Tehran's rulers. Knowing the hazards involved in Iranian policy and, prompted by its national and pan-Arab responsibilities, the Egyptian leadership naturally voiced support for the fraternal state of Bahrain, which has been subjected to pressure and schemes for over two years.

Keeping up their hostile policies against the sisterly Arab Gulf states, Iran's mullahs never stop trying to destabilize these countries. This is not a false accusation; it is a fact confirmed by reports from Dubai on the discovery of a shipment of Iranian weapons smuggled into the region. Against this hostile conduct the Gulf Cooperation Council states got together to examine the dimensions of these conspiratorial attempts, rejecting Iranian interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf.

It is natural to lose confidence in that regime, which undermines pan-Arab security with its irresponsible and malicious conduct, contradicting the call for cohesion, cooperation, and tolerance preached by Islam.

The only explanation for all this is that the ruling regime in Tehran seeks to light the fuse in the entire region. In other words, this regime wants to destroy the region and then sit on the rubble.

Iran is entitled to have its own revolution, which it claims is Islamic. But it has no right to force on others what it forces on the Iranian people, who were unlucky enough to fall prey to the mullahs' fantasies and hallucinations.

Libya

Libya: 'Islamic Martyrs Movement' Claims Killings, Targets Tripoli

MM1206111796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Libya: Arms Stolen From Bani Walid Factory, Lieutenant Colonel Heading Antiatheism Office Killed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Libyan opposition sources said yesterday that large quantities of arms were stolen recently from the Bani Walid arms factory belonging to the Libyan Military Industrialization Organization.

The sources stated that arrests were made in the Bani Walid area and that a group of factory workers and some civilians accused of acquiring or distributing these arms were arrested. The sources stated that the arms were distributed in Bani Walid, Tarhunah, al-Zantan, and al-Rujban.

The sources said that this is the second incident of its kind at the Bani Walid factory. The first occurred in 1990. A group of oppositionists were arrested and jailed in the military police prison but were released later. As is known, Bani Walid city has been subject to tight security measures since the rebellion that occurred there in 1993, called the "October uprising," whose effects the authorities still have not tackled due to the involvement of tribal, political, and military factors.

Meanwhile, a person from a movement calling itself the Islamic Martyrs Movement [harakat al-shuhada' al-islamiyah] has told AL-HAYAH that two weeks ago the movement killed Lieutenant Colonel Miftah Ba'yu, head of the antiatheism office in Banghazi, and that he was buried in Ajdabiya, his birthplace, last week. The speaker said that the same movement had earlier killed two Libyan officers in front of the Egyptian Embassy in Tripoli, and that its members took part in the Darnah incidents two months ago.

The speaker said that the man in charge of the movement, Muhammad al-Hami, had assigned him to contact [the newspaper] and announce the operation. He pointed out that al-Hami is pursued by the authorities and in hiding. He announced that "the movement's next operations will be carried out in Tripoli, now that its network in Banghazi has been uncovered and 20 of its members have been arrested."

He went on: "The Islamic Martyrs Movement declares that it is not targeting civilians or the so-called 'Revolutionary Committees'; it is targeting Libyan security leaders. It also declares that it has nothing to do with the Militant Libyan Group [al-jama'ah al-libiyah al-muqatilah] or the jihad groups, that it is opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood group, as there are disputes between them, and that its young men are not 'Afghans' [people who fought alongside Afghan mojahedin against Soviet forces]. They are the young men of the awakening who are receiving every support from all the other Islamic groups."

Other Libyan sources have confirmed the murder of Lt. Col. Ba'yu. However, they noted that the Islamic Martyrs Movement was not known previously and that

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it is probably one of the small Islamic and non-Islamic groups operating inside Libya.

Sudan

Sudan: Opposition Memorandum Warns al-Bashir To Step Down

MM1206082196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Jun 96 pp 1,6

[Report by Nizar Daw-al-Na'im in London and Kamal Hamid in Khartoum: "Sudanese Opposition Is Preparing an Uprising, Asks al-Bashir To Step Down"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudanese opposition leaders in Sudan yesterday sent a strongly worded memorandum to President 'Umar al-Bashir asking him to step down immediately from the government "in order to prevent the homeland from plunging into an upheaval which would destroy it, and to deter any foreign solutions from being imposed on it," and warned that the people would resort to "other options" if he fails to carry out their wishes.

The memorandum came only days after fuel price increases led to increases in the prices of goods, giving rise to a wide range of complaints in the country. AL-HAYAH has obtained information from oppositionists to the effect that the memorandum was prepared last year "and was waiting for the right opportunity to be delivered." AL-HAYAH has learned that preparations aimed at escalating the confrontation are under way, in the hope that a popular rising will take place to topple the government or force it to relinquish power. The oppositionists expect demonstrations to erupt in many cities in the country, in the event of an escalation by the government. The opposition Democratic National Grouping [DNG] parties and the political forces that they embody circulated the memorandum in various Sudanese cities.

The memorandum, delivered yesterday to the director of President al-Bashir's office at the presidential palace in Khartoum, was signed by Salah 'Abd-al-Salam al-Khalifah (former Ummah Party minister), Haj Mudawwi Muhammad Ahmad (a prominent Democratic Unionist Party member), Abel Alier (leading southern politician and former President Ja'far Numayri's vice president), Faruq 'Ali Zakariya (of the Communist Party), Adam Farajallah Atiyah (of the Sudanese National Party), Ezekiel Kory [last name as transliterated] (of the Southern Parties Grouping), Sarah Naqdallah (of the National Women's Grouping), Muhammad al-Hafiz Mahmud (for the lawyers), Muhammad al-Hasan Nurayn (for the trade unions), and 'Awad al-Karim Ba-Bakr (for the journalists).

It was noticed that the memorandum, of which AL-HAYAH obtained a copy, addressed al-Bashir as "commander in chief of the people's armed forces" and made no mention of his being the country's president. Al-Bashir was yesterday in the city of Dilling, in western Sudan, to attend a graduation ceremony.

The memorandum said: "On 30 June 1989, along with other officers and members of the Armed Forces as well as National Islamic Front [NIF] elements, you strayed from the country's constitutional legitimacy and took power by force from an elected government." The memorandum accused al-Bashir of "handing over power on behalf of the army to the NIF, a small minority party which monopolized the government and the country's wealth and imposed its religious fanaticism and politically backward views by force, subjecting the people to all kinds of tyranny and humiliation." The memorandum listed the "government's misguided policies and actions" such as "pretending to establish the rule of God's law, an action for which Islam is not to blame, and the use of brutal oppression, humiliation, imprisonment, torture, and the killing of innocents."

It outlined "the country's total economic collapse after the national currency lost its value" and the escalation of "the armed conflict in the homeland's south, turning it into a religious, cultural, and racial war in a country whose people have shown exemplary religious and racial tolerance all their lives." It pointed out that "the ensuing natural reaction is that some opposition forces in the north resorted to the same methods and opened a second war front in the east, which led to the widening of the war zone.... Over the past six years, the country lost more sons than there were civil war victims during the previous 30 years." The memorandum focused on the spread of corruption in various walks of life, the destruction of the Armed Forces' national structure, and Sudan's economic and political isolation from its Arab and African environment and from most of the world's states "because of the NIF's insistence on interfering in other people's affairs and making enemies of them by engaging in contemptible talk which led to Sudan being accused of terrorism, sheltering terrorism, and stripping the tolerant religion of Islam of its meaning because of the unjust, fanatic, and failed practices of the regime in the name of Islam."

The memorandum added: "Although we do not want to dwell on the government's shortcomings and the implications of the crisis that our country faces, since all its details are known here, in the region, and all over the world, we would however summarize everything mentioned earlier as follows:

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"1. The Sudanese people have clearly rejected the 30 June 1989 coup, the NIF's authority, and the Revolution regime's policies, practices, and institutions, and have expressed this rejection by unanimously agreeing on the DNG charter. Also, their rejection has escalated in many ways, such as mass emigration, the total refusal to participate in the authorities' organizations, and the uprisings in the streets and universities of the capital and provinces, and the citizens' total disregard for the regime's attempts at acquiring legitimacy by means of fraudulent elections led to the regime's internal isolation. Signs of rejection and opposition are increasing and widening every day, while oppression and brutality are having no effect and attempts at falsifying the people's will and embellishing the authority's image, which has strayed away from constitutional legitimacy and which it is now seeking after seven gloomy years by staging fraudulent elections, have failed.

"2. Internal and external dangers surround Sudan today, threatening its unity and national, social, and food security, and are threatening Sudan's very existence. The NIF regime's policies have fanned the flames around the regime at home and abroad. These are policies which will continue to their miserable end and are threatening to destroy the homeland as a whole.

"3. The only way to protect the country against the threats facing its future would be [to establish] a democratic regime based on political pluralism, respect for human rights, and the implementation of everything that has been agreed by the Sudanese people's political forces in the DNG's charter and the resolutions of its conference which dealt with the fateful issues of our country in June 1995, namely a specific transitional period with a national government, approved by all in power, whose first task would be to prepare a constitutional conference dedicated to peace and government issues and eventually hold free and fair democratic elections

"4. In these crucial and fateful circumstances, and in order to prevent the homeland from plunging into a crisis that would destroy it and deter any external solutions from being imposed on it, the current regime must respond to the people's demands and relinquish power immediately in order to allow our people to choose its interim national government. Otherwise, the people will resort to other options."

Sudan: Opposition Memo Seen as 'Last Bloodless Option'

MM1206112496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Jun 96 pp 1,6

[Report by Kamal Hamid in Khartoum and Nizar Daw-al-Na'im in London: "Al-Mahdi Tells AL-HAYAH: Opposition Memorandum Is Last Bloodless Option"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sadiq al-Mahdi, former Sudanese prime minister and leader of the opposition Ummah Party, said that the memorandum put forward by the leaders of the opposition Democratic National Grouping [DNG] in Sudan, asking president 'Umar al-Bashir to step down, "expresses Sudanese public opinion" and represents "the last option which is not covered in blood." It seems that, by not reacting to it, Khartoum's intention was to ignore the memorandum delivered to al-Bashir's office.

Al-Mahdi told AL-HAYAH yesterday in Khartoum that he supports the immediate formation of a national government which would convene a constitutional conference and hold general elections. He said that Sudan is "going through the most hazardous phase in its history, with its very existence and national security threatened."

He added that "the Sudanese are making attempts at home to solve their problems in a peaceful, bloodless manner. The memorandum put forward on Monday is one of these solutions." He urged officials to respond to the memorandum and "overcome the minor problems and questions about its timing, and to focus their attention instead on the key issues, because the country is in peril."

He urged the hastening of the announcement of the formation of "a national government that Sudanese public opinion would approve of for running its affairs during a transitional phase, during which a constitutional conference would be held to resolve the two most important issues facing the country, namely [acquiring] democratic legitimacy and achieving peace."

In response to a question on the type of government he envisions and whether it would include representatives of the banned parties or independent national figures, he said: "These are details. If there is agreement on the need to set up a national government, then its substance can be examined. What is important is that public opinion approves of it without being restricted by minor problems which could cause disagreement. We want to agree on the principle."

Sudanese officials yesterday refrained from commenting on the memorandum or the criticism it contains. There have been no reports in Khartoum concerning it. No

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arrests were made, nor were the memorandum's 10 signatories or other opposition figures questioned.

Informed sources in Khartoum, contacted from London, said that the Sudanese Government will ignore the memorandum, because an escalation of the situation now would not be in its interest, especially at this stage, when the opposition appears to be looking for a confrontation. The sources said that by adopting such a position, Khartoum will make the opposition think of a new way to escalate the situation.

A source close to the government commented on the memorandum saying that "it is the same memorandum which is presented every year, but with the date amended, and without any impact on public opinion. The only novelty this time is the mention of the Security Council resolution against Sudan." AL-HAYAH has learned that it was Salah 'Abd-al-Salam al-Khalifah, a former minister and one of the memorandum's signatories, who delivered it to the Sudanese president's office at the presidential palace the day before yesterday. It was learned that, after receiving the memorandum, the president's office said that the government will respond to it soon.

Mubarak al-Mahdi, secretary general of the DNG abroad and the Ummah Party's official in charge of external affairs, told AL-HAYAH yesterday that the memorandum "has achieved new gains for the opposition's work at home, which are: First, it has united the opposition's internal and external positions on the resolutions of the Asmara conference, considered to be the plan for the next government. Secondly, it has categorically announced that the government is illegitimate. Thirdly, it has asked the government to step down or face confrontation."

He believes that these developments "are signs of a broad popular move and an expression of citizens' feelings, unease, and rejection of the war." He added that the memorandum "expresses the rejection of the collapse of the economy, of the government's bankruptcy, and of the recent economic decisions."

On whether the opposition is ready for a confrontation with the government, he said: "Of course. The regime has no other option but a tough confrontation. From now on, all the means of political, military, and diplomatic escalation are ready to be used. This is a warning of a popular outburst and a popular uprising. This is the first step of a move. Political action at home has matured and its organization and unity are fully developed, and it now has a cause and a plan for which it will fight."

On the kind of support that the opposition abroad could offer to escalate the situation, he explained that "it includes diplomatic, political, media, and military support, should the situation evolve."

The opposition Democratic Unionist Party [DUP] yesterday issued a statement stressing that the memorandum "summed up the situation that Sudan has reached over the past seven years." The statement, signed by 'Adil Sayyid Ahmad 'Abd-al-Hadi, the DUP official spokesman and head of the DNG's Western Europe branch, of which AL-HAYAH yesterday received a copy, said that "the government's misguided practices, under the slogan of a modern approach, have led to the people's humiliation, economic ruin, and the illicit wealth acquired by a minority and followers of the National Islamic Front, and have transformed the war in the south into a religious, racial, and cultural war."

'Abd-al-Hadi explained that the opposition leadership abroad "wants to convey a final message to the government and advise it that it has no alternative but to accept what was in the memorandum and step down immediately and unconditionally.... Otherwise, the situation will force us to look for options to uproot the regime."

Meanwhile, Sudanese Information Minister Dr. Tayyib Ibrahim Muhammad Khayr said that in press statements published on Sunday, he attacked the preacher of the mosque frequented by al-Mahdi's supporters, but that he did not attack the faction of supporters "who represent a respectable political and Islamic entity. Many people support our Islamic steps and support the fact that we apply the Shari'ah and raise the same banners raised by the imam al-Mahdi."

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Foreign Minister on 'Terrorist Plot,' Stability

LD1106160096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0707 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 9 Jun — Bahrain's Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah has affirmed that his country has become "more optimistic about the stability and future of the region and more convinced that our Gulf future exists within our Gulf family." In an exclusive interview published by the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-SIYASAH, the Bahraini minister said that the stance of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], "stemmed from convictions and not out of courtesy and what happened to us was a plot hatched against all." [passage omitted]

He lauded the statement of the GCC issued at a recent meeting in Riyadh, affirming that "it was one of the clearest statements in dotting the i's and crossing the t's regarding the dangers threatening us from Iran."

He also lauded the stance of the peoples in the region because it signified that "the entity of the GCC has started to reap its fruits. In our view, there is no goal higher than the moral and ethical bond existing among the peoples of the region through thick and thin." [passage omitted]

Shaykh Muhammad expressed the belief that the GCC member-states "have understood the message and reacted accordingly in harmony with this understanding. Experience has taught us that the power of the GCC's performance is capable of blocking the way in front of dangers and this, by itself, must motivate the council to improve its performance economically or politically."

Shaykh Muhammad stressed that his country is "convinced of the importance of the GCC and its role in defending the interests of its member-states. Based on this conviction, we call for the GCC to emerge as a force capable of checking those who try to provoke one of its members. The recent events have shown that we are proceeding along this path."

Shaykh Muhammad affirmed that "the 21st century will witness a qualitative leap in the performance of the GCC economically which will enable us to establish complete economic integration."

Regarding the stances of the superpowers on the recent events in Bahrain, Shaykh Muhammad made clear that "the superpowers have supported our stance because of the evidence they have and because of their knowledge of Iranian behavior during previous years."

Regarding the recent terrorist plot, the minister of foreign affairs said that the plot went through three stages: "The first stage was to encourage the internal front against its [Bahrain's] leadership, the second stage was directly to carry out violent, criminal, and terrorist acts, and the third stage was to plan to topple the existing government and install a regime similar to the Iranian one."

He affirmed that his country "announced the details of the recent terrorist armed conspiracy after having gathered the full evidence and proofs regarding the Iranian role in the conspiracy."

Bahrain: 'Main Defendant' Arrested, Confesses to Weapons Smuggling

JN1106174096 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1720 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 11 Jun (WAKH) — A responsible Bahraini security source announced that the public security organs arrested the main defendant, who is charged with purchasing and smuggling weapons and ammunition into the country.

The security organs succeeded in seizing the smuggled weapons and ammunition. Defendant Ja'far 'Ali Husayn made a detailed confession before the examining judge on how the weapons were smuggled. The weapons were eight pistols and a quantity of ammunition.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Saudi-Yemeni Border Committee Meets in Riyadh

JN1106200096 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first meeting of the sixth round of talks of the Yemeni-Saudi committee on renewing the border markers began in Riyadh today. The committee was formed in accordance with Article 2 of the memorandum of understanding the two countries signed on 27 Ramadan 1415 Hegira [1995]. The Yemeni side is led by Dr. Muhammad 'Abd-al-Malik al-'Ulufi, head of the Land Survey Department; the Saudi side is led by Staff Major General Marba' Hasan al-Shahrani, director of the Military Survey Department of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh radio said the joint committee discussed its work and the subcommittees' work. The meeting was attended by Yemeni Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Muhammad Ahmad al-Kabak. [Video clip shows both delegations sitting at a table and holing talks.]

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Saudi Arabia: Growing Saudi-British Tension Over al-Mas'ari Affair

LD1106152496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1006 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tension in relations between Saudi Arabia and Britain is leading to their separation and hostility.

In the early days of the current year [beginning March 20 1996] Riyadh announced that if London does not change its behavior toward issues of concern to [Saudi] Arabia, that country will cancel all its military pacts with Britain. This comes at a time when Britain was expecting to sign new agreements on the sale of arms to the Saudis, thus gaining more profits for itself.

The current dispute between Riyadh and London is about one of the opponents of the Saudi Government called Muhammad al-Mas'ari, who is presently living in London. Saudi Arabia is extremely concerned about the emergence of internal opposition and is very unhappy about the fact that one of its opponents resides in London. It has repeatedly asked Britain expel him. The rejection of this request has led to tension in relations between the two countries and has made Saudi officials pessimistic toward the policies of the British Government.

Britain, which is coveting the highly profitable arms trade in the region and is trying to preserve and extend its influence over the shaykhdoms of the southern regions of the Persian Gulf, is worried lest the Saudis react in an unexpected manner — a reaction which may turn Saudi Arabia's threats of cancelling its agreements with London into a reality.

In order to prevent this, Britain is trying, on the one hand, to talk with the Riyadh officials and convince them that Mr. al-Mas'ari's presence in London cannot be counted as a threat. To this end, the head of the department in charge of the export of British military equipment arrived in Saudi Arabia a few days ago and held talks with the officials of that country. In addition to this, a number of British officials have visited Arabia in the past few months and held talks on this issue with Saudi officials.

On the other hand, Britain — resorting to its old method of creating discord between regional countries and exploiting this discord to secure its own interests — has endeavored to make the countries of the region feel negative toward each other, and in this way, it has not only encouraged them to buy arms to confront imaginary enemies but has also diverted attention from some of the critical issues over which it is in dispute with some of these regional countries.

Thus, while the head of the arms export department has gone to Arabia to try and eliminate the differences between London and Riyadh, the British ambassador in Arabia has been talking about existing threats in the region and has tried to frighten Arabia and other regional countries with these imaginary threats.

What is certain is that if the regional countries — in balance with their own interests and those of the region's nations — confronted these interfering powers, they would be able to secure their objectives and interests. If this does not happen, they will then be trapped in their fraudulent net and would pave the way for the fulfilment of the demands of great powers.

United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates: Diplomatic Relations Established With Malawi

JN1106191896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1715 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, 11 Jun (WAKH) — The United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Malawi decided to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level effective 12 June. [passage omitted]

United Arab Emirates: Chief of Staff Receives Chinese Defense Minister

JN1206094896 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 9 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu Dhabi, WAM [EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY] — Air Force Lieutenant General His Highness Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, Armed Forces chief of staff, received Chi Haotian, Chinese vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, state councillor, and defense minister, who is currently visiting the country. The two men held friendly talks on military subjects of common interest.

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Iraq: UN Disarmament Inspection Team Withdrawn After Standoff

NC1106171596 Paris AFP in English 1716 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, June 11 (AFP) — The United Nations has withdrawn a team of disarmament inspectors from a Republican Guard site in Iraq after an eight-hour standoff with Iraqi authorities, Western diplomats said Tuesday [11 June].

UN Special Commission Chairman Rolf Ekeus, who briefed UN Security Council president Nabil al-'Arabi on the matter on Tuesday, was to inform the full 15-member Security Council of developments at 3:30 p.m. (1930 GMT).

Ekeus' team is overseeing the disarmament of Iraq as laid out in a ceasefire agreement ending the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq: 'Aziz Comments on Inspection Standoff

JN1206083096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0754 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Jun (INA)— Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said: We cautioned Rolf Ekeus, head of the Special Commission, to avoid making any provocative inspection requests of sites related to sovereignty and national security, as happened with the inspection team he sent in March this year. We then asked him to focus on technical and professional matters in order to close the files, because we have offered him all the information and clarifications requested by Special Commission.

In a statement to INA today, Tariq 'Aziz said: Despite this warning and our assertion to him that we are ready to cooperate with the Special Commission objectively and professionally, away from any provocative attempts with tendentious political motives, the head of the Special Commission insisted on sending a 57-member inspection team. Yesterday morning, the head of the inspection team requested access to eight locations in the Abu Ghurayb area. We allowed it to enter six of these sites, and we denied it access to two sites that belong to the Republican Guards.

Tariq 'Aziz said: The six sites we agreed to be inspected were inspected yesterday afternoon, but they did not find anything they claimed was hidden there. This morning, the inspection team resumed its provocative actions by demanding entry into another site that belongs to the Republican Guards in Baghdad. We did not allow the team to enter, but we did allow the team to enter a number of industrial sites.

He said: We did not prevent the inspection team from entering the abovementioned sites because we are hiding banned material there, as the Special Commission alleges, but because they are sites that have to do with national security.

Tariq 'Aziz added: Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations, met with the Security Council president yesterday and proposed, based on instructions from headquarters [Foreign Ministry], sending a special mission representing the permanent Security Council member states and the state that hold the council presidency this month—Egypt—to Baghdad. We emphasized that we will allow this mission, regardless of its nature and whether it is a mission of diplomats or experts, to enter and search the abovementioned sites or any other sites the Special Commission claims to contain hidden documents or materials, in order to prove the soundness of our position.

The deputy prime minister added that the Special Commission inspections have turned into an endless story. Since 1991, 149 Special Commission inspection teams have visited Iraq.

In his statement to INA, Tariq 'Aziz said: They always say they are looking for hidden things. They enter the locations they want to search, but find nothing. Then they return, and so on. In March, as well as now, they have sought to enter sites related to sovereignty and national security, such as the Ministry of Irrigation and the Republican Guards. This was not done by the Special Commission before, except during the Agriculture Ministry affair in 1992. So why, after five years and after all the obligations that have been honored, are they trying to enter sites that have to do with sovereignty and national security? When will this long story, which has been going on for five years, come to an end?

Tariq 'Aziz said: The Security Council's permanent members are directly responsible for issuing, interpreting, and implementing the resolutions in a fair and balanced manner and deciding whether these resolutions have been implemented or not. We want them to intervene directly in order to make sure that we are hiding nothing and that we have honored all our basic obligations, as stipulated in Resolution 687. This makes it incumbent on the Security Council to honor its obligations and implement Paragraph 22 of this resolution without delay.

Tariq 'Aziz added: We have a legitimate right to be worried about the entry of the inspectors, who belong to countries that have hostile schemes against Iraq, into locations pertinent to national security. These inspectors could carry out intelligence activities for their countries,

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apart from the Special Commission tasks, as defined by the Security Council resolutions.

INA has learned that the current inspection team consist of 57 persons, 22 of whom are Americans, eight Britons, and nine from other nationalities.

Iraq: Clash Between Talabani Followers, Islamic Movement Reported

JN1106142896 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 5 Jun 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-'IRAQ Exclusive — Arrivals from the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan said that Irbil Governorate has been the scene of armed clashes between the Jalalists [followers of Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] and the so- called Islamic Movement, which is an agent movement supported by the Tehran regime. Dozens of citizens were killed by the random exchange of fire and the shells that fell on residential areas.

All this has happened at a time when the agents claim that stability, security, and order prevail in the region. Developments show otherwise. The region has been the scene of security disturbances and administrative chaos since the withdrawal of the central state agencies. These agencies withdrew as a result of the abnormal situation in the region in the wake of the aggression. Treasonous factions vandalized the region under the spears of foreigners.

Iraq: Turkish Troops Ambush, Kill 11 Kurds 30 May

JN1206102296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During the Turkish Army's continued attacks on innocent citizens along the border areas in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkish troops ambushed and killed 11 civilians and workers from Iraqi Kurdistan on 30 May. The citizens were martyred while they were going to the (Khawakurk) area to work. [passage omitted]

In a separate development, as a result of the Turkish Army's indiscriminate artillery shelling of the border areas in Kurdistan on June, citizens Zad Yusuf Musa and Muhammad 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Umar from Ba'tufah were martyred while they were traveling with their families in the (Silawu Yasuq) area, near the (Sayli) village, 10 km from the border. Two other citizens were injured. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Iran's Islamic Jihad Liaison Apprehended

TA1106154696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It was learned today that last March at the Rafah border terminal the security forces apprehended an Islamic Jihad activist who was the liaison between his organization and Iran and Hizballah. The man, Hasan Hawajah, is the brother of Mahmud Hawajah, the Islamic Jihad commander in Gaza who was murdered a year ago. After his brother's death, Hasan was sent to restore Islamic Jihad's infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. The Iranians promised him large sums of money to train activists and to accumulate weapons. Charges were pressed against him yesterday at the military court in Erez.

The Jerusalem police arrested a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activist suspected of planning a suicide bombing in downtown Jerusalem. Ghassan 'Ahmaru, a 27-year-old resident of Hebron, was arrested in possession of a forged Israeli identity card. It came out in the course of his interrogation that he was a member of Hamas and was being sought by the security forces for terrorist activity.

Israel: Weizman Proposes Syrian Troops 'Deploy' in South Lebanon

TA1206093796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 12 Jun 96 p 7

[Report by Gabi Baron in Istanbul]

[FBIS Translated Text] At his meeting with Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday, President 'Ezer Weizman raised the idea of permitting Syrian troops to deploy in south Lebanon in order to restore calm to the security zone.

This was disclosed by a source close to the president yesterday. Weizman defended the proposal by explaining that Syria was capable of upholding agreements, and if it pledged to guarantee quiet along the border between Lebanon and Israel, then there was nothing wrong with this. Israel has already tried everything to stop hostile activity in south Lebanon, and can also consider a new approach.

Israel: Peres Decides To Stay in Politics, Opposes Early Labor Vote

TA1206055896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has decided to remain politically active. Peres reportedly has said he is opposed to moving forward the date to choose Labor's new party head.

Labor Knesset Member Nisim Zvili says he will leave his position as the party's secretary general in the near future. Zvili told Amy Rhodes he would meet with Prime Minister Peres to discuss the terms of his departure. [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres To Announce Plans After New Cabinet Installed

TA1206091096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says he does not wish to deal with party affairs in his present capacity, and that he will announce his plans for the future only after a new government is established. Our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar says that Shim'on Peres was reacting to reports that he had decided to remain politically active and to deal with rebuilding Labor until the party is required to elect a new leadership in 14 months, under party regulations.

Israel: SHAS Leader Der'i Suffers 'Mild Stroke'

TA1106175196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Checks undergone by SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Knesset Member Arye Der'i at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem show that he suffered a mild stroke and will probably be released from the hospital tomorrow. Der'i's associates pointed an accusing finger at a telephone interview he gave to Qol Yisra'el, at the end of which Der'i became ill and was admitted to hospital. [passage omitted]

Israel: Der'i Stays in Hospital; SHAS Suspends Coalition Talks

TA1206081096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Knesset Member [MK] Arye Der'i is to remain hospitalized. Our correspondent 'Ofra Nehmad has learned from Hadassah 'En-Kerem Hospital that Der'i's condition is satisfactory, but doctors decided to keep him in the hospital for a rest. MK Der'i was hospitalized in the neurology ward two days ago following what was defined as a mild stroke.

[Reporting on Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0400 GMT on 12 June, political correspondent Udi Segal cites SHAS Secretary General Eli Yishay as saying that "SHAS will not resume the coalition talks with the Likud until its leader, MK Arye Der'i, recovers from the stroke he suffered two days ago. In view of this, the

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Likud's prospects of forming a government by 17 June seems to be a very difficult mission."]

Israel: Netanyahu Plans To Make Olmert Jerusalem Affairs Minister

TA1206062296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0400 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu plans to appoint Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert minister for Jerusalem affairs. Since Netanyahu intends for Olmert to remain the mayor of Jerusalem, he will have to pass an amendment to the Multiple Positions Law that stipulates, among other things, that a mayor cannot be a cabinet minister.

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri Cited on Netanyahu's 'Utterances,' Damascus Talks

JN1106170296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following Hizballah's operation against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left Beirut for Damascus where he met with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. Talks centered on the latest developments in Lebanon and the region. Our Damascus correspondent Thana' al-Imam asked the Lebanese prime minister his opinion on current issues:

[Begin recording] [al-Hariri] The statements coming from Israel and the utterances of the Israeli prime minister-elect give a negative impression of the peace process. This is regrettable, though true.

[Al-Imam] How do you view reports on differences between the Lebanese Government and Hizballah?

[Al-Hariri] The Lebanese Government is a state body, representing Lebanon and all the Lebanese people. Hizballah is a party that has political approaches and aspirations with which we do not agree. Therefore, differences are natural. Some people confuse this with the issue of the resistance. We have no differences on the issue of the resistance. However, we do not approve of Hizballah's political approach and program.

[Al-Imam] Did you discuss this subject with President al-Asad?

[Al-Hariri] No, we did not discuss this issue.

[Al-Imam] What did you talk about?

[Al-Hariri] The Middle East, the region, the peace issue, the upcoming Arab summit.

[Al-Imam] What hope do you pin on the expanded Arab summit? Do you believe it will result in a unified position?

[Al-Hariri] Undoubtedly, the upcoming Arab summit in Cairo will be beneficial to the Arabs and the Arab nation. Do not forget that the Arab leaders have not met for the past six years. We in Lebanon believe that Arab meetings serve our interests. We believe that this will reflect positively on Lebanon and the Lebanese situation. [end recording]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Comments on Summit, Damascus Talks

NC1106172096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 11 Jun (MENA)—Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has praised the efforts by the Egyptian, Syrian, and Saudi leaders to restore Arab solidarity. In an exclusive statement to MENA, he praised the initiative of Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz to close Arab ranks, restore Arab solidarity, and strengthen the Arab position. He stressed Lebanon's support for these efforts. He said that Lebanon will always support every joint Arab action based on its firm faith in the common fate and its genuine ties to its Arab people.

Referring to his consultations in Damascus today, al-Hariri said that they dealt with all the new developments in light of the recent events, the results of the latest Damascus tripartite summit, and the agenda of the forthcoming Arab summit in Cairo. Al-Hariri, who left Damascus today, stressed that Syrian-Lebanese coordination and consultations are more necessary now than ever before. He noted that both countries are determined to continue their coordination on all issues, particularly the Arab efforts to confront the continuing Israeli aggression and occupation of south Lebanon.

An official Syrian spokesman said today that President Hafiz al-Asad and Prime Minister al-Hariri discussed issues relating to current developments in the region and in the Arab world as well as bilateral issues that concern both countries.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Returns, Praises Syria's Role

NC1206074296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Returning to Beirut, Prime Minister al-Hariri immediately went to the presidential palace and met President Ilyas al-Hirawi. He briefed the president on his three-hour discussions with Syrian President al-Asad.

Al-Hariri said his consultations in Damascus touched on all the issues in light of developments, the outcome of the recent Damascus tripartite summit, and the agenda for the forthcoming Arab summit.

Prime Minister al-Hariri asserted that Lebanese-Syrian coordination and consultation are now more necessary than ever and that the two countries are determined to continue coordinating on all the issues, particularly joint Arab efforts in the face of continuing Israeli aggression and occupation. Al-Hariri said the leading Syrian role regarding Arab action and the ability of President al-Asad to uphold his wise policy, to which everyone attests, will continue to reinforce Arab hopes.

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Lebanon: Israeli Vehicular Reinforcements Seen in South

NC1106114696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces, using artillery deployed in their new position in 'Alman, bombarded the hills surrounding Jisr al-Qa'qa'iyah, the outlying parts of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and nearby wadis.

Israeli reinforcements, including new military vehicles, were seen at 0750 today leaving Tallat al-'Ubbad and taking up new positions in Hula.

The western sector of the south passed a night of guarded calm in the wake of the shelling to which it was subjected yesterday, along with the central sector. The Israeli bombardment came in the wake of a resistance attack on the road between al-Khardali and al-Dabshah, in which five Zionist soldiers were killed.

Israeli combat and reconnaissance aircraft overflew the area throughout the night.

Lebanon: Caution Said To Prevail After Israeli Attacks

NC1206062396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 12 June 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Tibnin reports that an atmosphere of caution and anticipation prevails in the central sector. He says the areas of Yatar and Sribbin were subjected to Israeli attacks last night accompanied by intensive flights by warplanes over the central sector.

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Syria: 'Sources' on Cairo Meeting, Proposed 'Islamic Summit'

JN1106121096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Optimism prevails in the Syrian capital amid preparations for the first Arab summit in six years in Cairo at the end of this month. Official Syrian sources said Damascus is expecting the Arab countries to come up with a unified stand on the latest developments in the region and the international challenges, particularly the election of Binyamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister and all that Netanyahu represents in terms of adopting rigid stands toward the peace process, beginning with his refusal to withdraw from the occupied Arab territory. This withdrawal is the basis of the land for peace principle.

Syria expects the Arab countries that built bridges of relations with Israel, to freeze these relations in support of the Syrian and Lebanese stands in the peace process as a preliminary step to confront Netanyahu's expected hard-line stands.

The Syrian sources refused to react to the accusations leveled by Arab countries, noting that there are other objectives behind the timing of these accusations. The sources added that Syria will not help Israel play its game of trying to drive a wedge between the Arab countries at a time when these countries are preparing for a summit that will unify their stands.

The Syrian sources said the call for holding an Islamic summit after the Arab summit is possible, but an Islamic ministerial meeting is more urgent. The sources added that no decision has been made about this. The Organization of the Islamic Conference will make this decision after the Arab summit and in light of its results.

Syria: 'Great Importance' of Upcoming Cairo Summit Noted

JN1106143996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 11 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The Damascus summit revived hopes for restoring Arab solidarity to achieve a unified stand in the face of Israeli belligerence, which has exceeded all limits and is now threatening the Arabs' present and future. This is because Israel responded to the peace process by procrastinating and temporizing. Israel regards the peace process as a cover that can be used to blackmail Arab states, one after another, and mislead world public opinion.

The Shamir government participated in the Madrid conference against its will. Shamir himself said then that he had planned for protracted futile negotiations that would allow him to Judaize the occupied Arab territories and plant them with settlements. The Rabin government competed with the extremist Israeli right over who could come up with more ingenious ways of intransigence and inflexibility. The result was that the peace process stumbled and Rabin himself was killed at the hands of extremists. The Peres government chose to follow the policy of its predecessor by flexing its muscles in southern Lebanon and halting the talks on the Syrian track, instead of pursuing the peace process with vigor and speed. Thus, it opened the door to Likud leader Netanyahu and his extremist allies, who say publicly that the peace process must stop and that Israel must annex all the occupied territories and expel the Arabs from them. Throughout his election campaign, Netanyahu repeatedly said that under no circumstances will he give up the Golan or Jerusalem. He also said that he will not withdraw from the city of Hebron and that he will expand the settlements in the occupied territories. Netanyahu made it clear that he will not adhere to the agreements signed with the self-rule authority, despite the fact that these agreements do injustice to the rights of the Palestinian people.

Under such circumstances, there is no sense of any future negotiations with Israel, as long as Israel violates the foundations of the peace process, primarily the land-for-peace principle. All these developments require a review of the Arab situation to reach conclusions and face Zionist arrogance with a unified stand that preserves Arab rights, dignity, and territories. This is especially true since the Arabs responded sincerely to the U.S. initiative and international efforts and did their best to facilitate the mission of U.S. and international envoys. The Arabs set no conditions for establishing peace in the region, except the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the principles of international law.

Syria, represented by President Hafiz al-Asad, played a major role in protecting Arab rights. Syria warned against being carried away by Israeli illusions and promises and called for adhering to the principles of the peace process. Syria also repeatedly called on the Arabs not to take unilateral action and to adhere to their legitimate rights through a unified stand that adopts international legitimacy as the basis of any negotiations or solutions.

Successive developments bear out Syria's sound position. The Damascus summit is a good foundation for broader Arab activity that seeks to reunite the Arabs, close ranks, affirm constants, place the international

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community before its responsibilities, and face Israel with the fact that the Arabs will not be blackmailed anymore. There can be no peace in the region other than a just and comprehensive peace, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

The Cairo summit, which will be held late June, has great importance. Arab countries have responded to Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi efforts, having realized that Israel's policies do not seek to achieve peace, but seek to swallow up and Judaize Arab territories and blackmail the international community. These Israeli policies push the region to the brink of the unknown.

Needless to say, Israel would not have acted in this belligerent manner and gone public about its expansionist, aggressive ambitions if it had not been for the fragmentation and division of the Arab nation and the weak international reaction, which is also the result of Arab fragmentation. Influential sides in the international community do not attach any importance to weak people. However, they attach importance to a strong Arab nation and a unified Arab front. The Arabs have the necessary resources, land, space, and population. They have all the requirements of a strong nation. It is not enough for the Arabs to declare their genuine desire for a just and comprehensive peace based on international resolutions. This desire must be supported by a strong, solid political and material position.

The Damascus summit paved the way for the Arabs to regain their solidarity, strength, and balance, after many years of imbalance. The Arab summit in Cairo should lay stronger foundations for solidarity, strength, and balance. There is no life for the Arabs without their unity and solidarity.

Syria: Summit Urged To Undertake 'Thorough Review' of Peace Stance

JN1206080796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0455 GMT 12 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial titled "Israel Threatens the Peace Process With Collapse," TISHRIN says: The statement issued at the Damascus tripartite summit emphasized that realizing a just and comprehensive peace is a strategic option and that Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia adhere to the agreed-upon principles of the peace process, especially the land-for-peace principle and the implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy that call for full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. No one expects that the Arab summit in Cairo later this month will deviate from this position.

The question is not about closing or not closing the door in the face of the new Israeli Government. It is about Israel's full commitment to the principles of the peace process and its objectives and the international community shouldering of its responsibility toward the new antipeace, intransigent positions announced by Israeli Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu.

TISHRIN asks: What is left of the peace process if Netanyahu proceeds with his position? Over what will the Arabs negotiate? What will happen to the international and Arab efforts that have been made over the last few years? What is the position of the U.S. Administration, which launched the peace process and is the party that created the land-for-peace principle and committed itself to realizing a just and comprehensive peace based on the Security Council resolutions?

TISHRIN says: It is natural for the Arabs to call for studying the situation and reviewing their policies. They have been honest to the cause of peace, but have been met with only intransigence by Israel. Furthermore, Netanyahu clearly announced today that he will not withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and will not meet any of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

TISHRIN stresses that Israel would not have been such a bully without Arab fragmentation and without its success at drawing some Arabs into incomplete and partial solutions. It is time for a thorough review aimed at uniting the Arab positions and defining the ways for restoring the land and rights.

TISHRIN concludes: The Cairo summit will work toward realizing pan-Arab solidarity and uniting Arab ranks. At the same time, it is also a summit of just and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of the international community.

Commenting on the same subject in its editorial today, AL-BA'TH says: The Damascus tripartite summit laid the foundation for a strategic Arab demand in face of Israeli rejection and the new Israeli leadership, which despises the peace and the international peace efforts.

AL-BA'TH adds: The Arabs will not relinquish one iota of their soil and will not be tolerant toward the usurper. They will not bargain on their rights, and, at the same time, they will adhere to peace as an objective and a policy. This was entrenched at the Damascus summit and was supported by the Arabs. This will be the core of the new Arab action at the Cairo summit and the events that follow it.

AL-BA'TH stresses that the Arab individual, who was disappointed by the forces that openly endorsed positions that are unsuitable to peace and obstruct it,

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is the one who demands, now and in the future, that many positions that wasted time and benefited his enemies, by reconsidered. The deliberate waste of time is responsible for the expansion of Israeli settlements and for the arrogance and belligerence by Israel and its rulers. Time was wasted through the erroneous defense of Israel's policy and its occupation of Arab territories at international forums and through the false assurances given to the Arabs. These assurances lost all credibility during the recent Israeli crime against the Lebanese people.

AL-BA'TH concludes: We demand that the upcoming Arab summit make Arab decisionmaking a completely Arab process, emphasize the Arabs' unified position in support of the cause, and strongly ahere to the Security Council resolutions that reject the occupation of other's land by force.

International concern over the next Arab summit is that the true Arab presence become clear through Arab accord and consensus and that the Arab decision will be strong when the Arabs have a unified position.

Syria: AL-THAWRAH Says Likud Must 'Understand' Summit Message

JN1206095196 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0715 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 12 Jun (SANA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says it is necessary for Likud, which is preparing to assume power in Israel, to understand the clear vision that was presented at the Damascus summit and that will be emphasized at the Cairo summit before the party proceeds with destroying what is left of the peace process through its extremism and dreams of expansion and aggression.

In an editorial today, the newspaper stresses that peace is not created through extremism and aggression, but through the policy of abandoning occupation and expansion and fully recognizing the rights of others.

The newspaper says the peace process, on which the world pins much hope for realizing a just and comprehensive peace in the region, is facing very serious challenges following the victory of Likud, which is extremist in its ideology and policy, in the recent Israeli elections.

Syria: Government Denies Attempt on al-Asad's Life

MS1206122096 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 12 Jun 96 p 17

[Report by Gerald Butt: "Bombers Tried To Kill al-Asad"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Diplomats in Damascus are trying to check reports circulating in Europe and the Middle East of an attempt to assassinate President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria.

Earlier this month, the State Department in Washington said there had been a number of bomb explosions in Syria over the past month. American citizens there were advised to take care.

The Syrian government vehemently denied that there had been any explosions.

Along with news of the explosions, there have been persistent reports reaching Amman of widespread arrests among the ethnic Turkish community in Syria.

Arab diplomats in Amman say a bomb exploded in Damascus in the first week of this month on a route that President al-Asad was expected to take to a memorial ceremony for Arabs executed by the Ottoman Turks last century.

But the diplomats said the president had not attended the ceremony.

In the aftermath of this and the other bombings, up to 500 people, mostly of Turkish origin, were reported to have been arrested.

But a senior Lebanese official with close links with Syria said in Beirut last night that he had no knowledge of an assassination attempt.

The rounding up of Turks comes at a time of strained relations between Damascus and Ankara. Syria has denounced the growing military co-operation between Turkey and Israel, while the government in Ankara has accused Damascus of supporting the militant Kurdish separatist group, the PKK.

Syria: Al-Asad, Lebanon's al-Hariri Discuss Current Developments

JN1106144896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1415 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at the People's Palace at 1215 [0915 GMT] today. They discussed current developments in the region and the Arab arena, as well as issues of interest to Syria and Lebanon.

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Syria: Lebanon's al-Hariri Comments on al-Asad Meeting

JN1106195096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1815 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri at the People's Palace at 1215 [0915 GMT] today. They discussed current developments in the region and the Arab arena, as well as issues of interest to Syria and Lebanon.

In a statement after the meeting, al-Hariri praised Syria's pioneering role and President Hafiz al-Asad's ability, which everyone recognizes, to fulfill pan-Arab action and to strengthen Arabs' hopes in the future.

He said his consultations in Damascus touched on all recent developments, the outcome of the Damascus tripartite summit, and the upcoming Arab summit in Cairo. He said he also discussed the contacts with the various concerned Arab capitals on the future of the peace process.

Al-Hariri stressed that Syrian-Lebanese consultation and coordination is now more important than ever and that the two countries are determined to continue their consultations on all issues, especially on the joint Arab efforts to confront the ceaseless Lebanese aggression.

Al-Hariri hailed the initiative taken by the Syrian, Egyptian, and Saudi leaders to work on closing ranks, fortifying positions, and rebuilding Arab solidarity. He said: Lebanon has always supported and will always support any collective pan-Arab action out of its firm belief in the same destiny and its genuine belonging to its Arab nation.

Syria: Al-Asad Welcomes Iran's 'All-Out' Support for Arab States

LD1006090196 Tehran IRNA in English 0735 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, June 10, IRNA — Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in a meeting here Sunday night with the visiting Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, appreciated the Islamic republic's all-out support for Arab states.

He noted that Iran resisted all Zionist plots aimed at sowing discord among Muslims throughout the region.

As to tactical moves taken in the occupied lands as a result of the recent Israeli elections, al-Asad underlined the need to hold a summit meeting of Arab states and urged all regional countries to stage effective campaigns against Zionist conspiracies.

Meanwhile, Velayati stressed that the Islamic republic attaches great importance to confronting Israeli aggression. He also reiterated Iran's support for the stances of Syria and other Islamic states. They also called for close and continious cooperation among all Islamic countries.

Velayati, heading a delegation, arrived here Sunday on a two-day official visit. He was carrying a message from President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to his Syrian counterpart on latest regional developments and issues of mutual interest.

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Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Voting Begins in Parliamentary Elections

BK1206025696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Election to Jatiya Sangsad [parliament] is being held in the country today. [12 June] Polling began by now [words indistinct] will continue till 1600 in the afternoon. Today is a public holiday. A total of [words indistinct] political parties and independent candidates are in the race. BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party], Awami League and Jamaat-i-Islami have fielded candidates in all the 300 constituencies followed by the Jatiya Party with 295 and Zaker Party 241 candidates. Over 5 crore [one crore is equal to 10 million] 67 lakh [one lakh is equal to 100,000] voters are expected to exercise their franchise. [passage omitted]

Bangladesh: Army Chief Tells AFP Military To Ensure 'Free Elections'

BK1206080596 Hong Kong AFP in English 0359 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, June 12 (AFP) — Army Chief Lieutenant General Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman pledged the Bangladeshi military — previously key players in the country's political life — would ensure Wednesday's [12 June] nationwide elections would be "free (and) meaningful."

"We want free elections ... a meaningful election," Rahman told AFP as he left to vote with his family at a ballot station in Dhaka Centonment military barracks.

Rahman, who took charge of the military after a failed rebellion last month, said more than 40,000 of his troops were deployed across the country to help ensure fair and violence-free voting.

Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena said in a televised address to the nation Tuesday [11 June] that the armed forces were not posted at polling centres, but were at "striking" distance and would respond to requests by polling officials in case of major disturbances.

"The troops are under the command of the election commission," he said.

Defence sources said Wednesday that so far they had no reports of any incident and voting was progressing peacefully across Bangladesh.

In Dhaka and other cities, large number of voters began queueing up hours before voting started at 8:00 a.m. (0200 GMT).

The 100,000-strong armed forces ruled Bangladesh directly or indirectly between 1975 and 1990, but took a back seat after democracy was restored in 1991.

Bangladesh: Troops Arrive After Bomb Blasts in Chittagong Poll Area

BK1206065496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0644 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh, June 12 (AFP) — Troops were called in at a suburban polling centre early Wednesday [12 June] after several crude bombs exploded nearby, officials said, adding that there were no injuries or damage.

There has been a large turnout for the election, which has otherwise been accompanied by unprecedented festivity in this port city.

In the suburban Boalkhali constituency, bomb blasts were heard near a crowded polling centre, officials and witnesses said, adding suspected troublemakers fled before police and militia fanned out.

Hundreds of voters waiting in queue remained in place, apparently unpanicked, and balloting went ahead as one army vehicle arrived a few minutes later from a nearby camp in an apparent attempt to reassure people of their security.

Firecrackers were set off outside another polling centre in nearby Bakulia city constituency, but voting went ahead smoothly, police said, adding they suspect the firecrackers were an attempt to scare voters.

Voting was "very much peaceful, encouraging and a visible festive mood prevailed all around the voting centres," said Nazrul Islam, the port city's chief polling official. He said the balloting was progressing smoothly and that he expected the largest turnout of voters ever there.

Witnesses said hundreds of eligible men and women formed long queues at the suburban Fatehabad voting centre, where poll officials said some 33 percent of the 1,600 voters had cast their votes in two hours. The scene is same in the port city's several hundred polling centres in three parliamentary constituencies.

In many places, young and old voters alike were waiting in line despite the scorching sun, witnesses said, adding that hundreds of latecomers arrived to vote by midday.

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Bangladesh: Iranian Delegation Arrives To Observe 12 Jun Elections

LD1106171596 Tehran IRNA in English 1630 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Jun 11 (IRNA) — An Iranian delegation to observe the elections procedure in Bangladesh, headed by Foreign Ministry Advisor Javad Mansouri arrived here on Tuesday [11 June].

Mansouri referred to good relations between the two countries and said Iran is willing to cooperate with Bangladesh in various fields in line with its policy of having close ties with all Islamic states.

Over 267 international observers from different countries of the world have been invited to oversee the Seventh Parliamentary Polls of Bangladesh to be held on Wednesday [12 June] in 300 constituencies of the country.

India

India: Prime Minister Interviewed on Coalition

BK1006160896 Delhi INDIA TODAY in English 15 Jun 96 pp 46-47

["Excerpts" of an interview with Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda by Javed M. Ansari in Delhi on 30 May]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Q. You are heading a coalition. Some of the UF [United Front] constituents even contested the elections against the Janata Dal. What is it, apart from the antipathy towards the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], that binds you together?

A. We may have had some differences but we share a common vision for the country. What binds us together is our commitment to secularism and the federal structure of the polity. We share a common view about the need to remove poverty and unemployment and to help the agriculture sector. We are bound by common goals of uplifting the lot of women and making the SC/STs [scheduled castes and scheduled tribes], the minorities and the Backward Castes socially and economically stronger.

Q. There is a big question mark over the stability of your Government. For how long will you be able to carry along the various constituents?

A. I don't see why people have doubts about our survival. We have the support of over 300 MPs and 75 per cent of the votes polled were in favour of the parties that are in the UF or support us. The mandate was in favour of a coalition and we have responded to that. We may have not succeeded entirely in the past but we are all aware of the dangerous situation the country is in and the disastrous consequences that await us if we fail. It's not important how long I remain prime minister or how long my Government lasts. What is important is how we govern and what we achieve.

Q. Won't the decision of the Left and some regional parties to stay away affect the smooth functioning of your Government?

A. I don't think so. The left parties may or may not be in the Government but they are an integral part of the Front. The Left has been a guiding force and there is no ambiguity about their support. Likewise, the regional parties will play a constructive role in the functioning of the Government. In fact, this is the first government which is truly representative of the people of all regions of the country.

Q. But your party colleague Ramakrishna Hegde sees the UF as an "opportunistic" alliance.

A. It's his prerogative. Hegdeji is a very senior and distinguished colleague. He has his own ideas and I'm not going to join issue with him.

Q. The Congress backing is vital to you. Therefore, will you allow it to dictate terms from the sidelines?

A. There is no question of the Congress or anybody else driving us. I did not aspire to become the prime minister. Once all secular parties reposed confidence in me, I could not refuse. I have no fear that any of the partners in the Front or the Congress will create problems.

Q. But doesn't accepting the support of the Congress amount to making a compromise?

A. The mandate favoured a coalition of secular forces. So I will try and make use of the wisdom of all the supporting parties including the Congress.

Q. In the past, the Congress has pulled down governments it had initially set out supporting. Do you have any fears that your Government will meet the same fate as that of Charan Singh and Chandra Shekhar?

A. You must be fair to the Congress. So far, they have not put any conditions whatsoever. The CWC [Congress Working Committee] on its own decided to support the formation of a secular government and even wrote to the President about it. I don't want to go into why they made that decision. They took the decision even before we approached them. I have absolutely no doubt about the sincerity of the Congress party's support to the UF Government.

Q. It seems your personal rapport with P.V. Narasimha Rao helped you to get the support of the Congress.

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A. The support was extended to the UF. In fact, the Congress had made it clear that it would support the formation of a secular government. It had nothing to do with my relationship with Mr Rao.

Q. Will you pursue the cases against Rao relating to St Kitts [bribery scandal] and the hawala [illegal money transfer] scandal?

A. There will be no personal or political vendetta. I have never made such deals before and I don't plan to do so now. I don't want to entangle my Government in such things.

Q. But what if Rao is chargesheeted?

A. The law always takes its own course and I cannot interfere with that.

Q. You have no experience of administration at the national level. How confident are you of making a success of your prime ministership?

A. I must admit I never expected to become the prime minister when I left Bangalore. I came to Delhi with the idea of helping my friends choose a leader. But the way things turned out, I was unable to reject the proposal made by senior leaders. Now that I have been entrusted with this responsibility, I will give it my best shot. There are a lot of senior and wise men in Parliament and I will try and make use of their wisdom and expertise. I realise my limitations. I'm not a very eloquent speaker and I have a problem with Hindi. But I also know that eloquent speeches alone cannot solve the common man's problems.

Q. Within the UF and the Congress there are some basic differences on the economic policy. As chief minister, you were closer to what Manmohan Singh preached than what was propagated by the left parties. What policy will you follow?

A. I want to make this point clear that almost all chief ministers, irrespective of their party ideologies, were in favour of reforms, be it in West Bengal, Rajasthan or Gujarat. A few days ago, they (the Shiv Sena-BJP Government in Maharashtra) approved the Enron deal despite all the tall claims they had made earlier. There may be some minor areas of difference but in principle, all state governments have welcomed investments. I will sit with them and try and come to some understanding.

Q. Will you roll back reforms?

A. No. The decisions that have been taken will be honoured. But in future when we tackle some of the pending issues, I will take everybody into confidence. That's why we have already set up a subcommittee which will work out a common approach.

Q. Has the Congress suggested the economic line it would want you to adopt?

A. I have not discussed anything with anybody. But any future action that my Government takes will only be done after due consultation with friendly parties. I will also take the Congress into confidence.

Q. As chief minister, you were involved in the Cauvery [river] dispute. Now as prime minister, you will have to decide on the issue. Won't this create a problem with the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] which is heading the Government in Tamil Nadu and is also an ally of your government?

A. The day I was elected leader of the UF, I made it clear that I will try my best to sort out the matter in a fair manner. I don't think it will be a problem.

Q. The UF's whole plank is built around countering communalism. As prime minister, how do you propose to tackle this problem?

A. There is absolutely no question of any compromise with communalism. I would like to ensure that all contentious issues are sorted out amicably.

Q. How do you propose to deal with the trouble in Kashmir?

A. My Government will do everything it can to solve the problem. I would like to sit down with my colleagues and all those who can come up with a solution.

India: Gowda Interviewed on Economic Situation

BK1106035096 Delhi OUTLOOK in English 12 Jun 96

["Excerpts" of interview with Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda by Y.P. Rajesh 'on board a private jet' in between Bangalore and New Delhi during the week of 27 May — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Rajesh] What makes you confident that your 13-party Government, dependent on Congress support, will be stable?

[Gowda] The Congress has offered unconditional support as long as some of the reforms initiated by them in the last five years are not totally reversed. The 13 parties in the coalition have decided not to insist on the implementation of contentious policies and programmes in their manifestos so that the basic foundation is undisturbed. So we are formulating a common minimum programme and setting up a steering committee involving all coalition partners to implement the programme and ensure relationships are not strained.

[Rajesh] Will the Congress be part of the steering committee?

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[Gowda] The Congress will not involve itself in the day-to-day functioning of our Government. But as the leader of the United Front (UF) I have assured the Congress president that I will carry all sections of the coalition without affecting the programmes of the Congress. I don't see any confusion arising here as the object of this Government will be to consult all parties and arrive at a consensus if there are any hitches. There won't be any unilateral decisions.

[Rajesh] Twice in the past, the Congress has pulled the rug from under minority regimes. Narasimha Rao is expected to do the same once the Congress is confident of facing the electorate.

[Gowda] It was different in '79 and '91. Unlike then, we didn't run to the Congress seeking support. This coalition is the result of the people's mandate for a secular Government.

[Rajesh] Won't the Congress' role amount to wielding power sans responsibility?

[Gowda] The voters have not found the Congress fit to be entrusted with responsibility. Neither did we get a clear mandate. But the primary concern is not whether the Congress or the Left will join the Government and be responsible or stay out and enjoy power.

The primary concern is to preserve India's secular fabric and we are doing it.

[Rajesh] But for how long will this remain the primary concern?

[Gowda] We can't afford another election now. At the same time, we must also find out the reason for the increase in the numerical strength of the communal forces. The increase points to some lapses on the part of secular parties. Like the internal differences in the Congress which led to people leaving the party and the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] benefiting in states like Madhya Pradesh. Or the differences in the Janata Dal that led to an erosion of our base.

We need to overcome our differences and formulate programmes to reduce the strength of communal forces. It could take two years or three, but only after we have achieved this will the time be opportune for elections.

[Rajesh] Your coalition has many towering personalities. Is there a risk of your being pushed around?

[Gowda] One doesn't need to be an MP for several terms or a chief minister to understand the problems faced by the country's citizens. And politicians with a genuine wish to seek solutions to the problems will not have any difficulty in facing people with a long stint in national politics. Whoever be the persons, any difference involving them will be sorted out through discussion and consensus. And all of us realise we need to make compromises at some point or the other.

[Rajesh] How did you establish cordial ties with Rao?

[Gowda] I don't deny that I have a cordial relationship with Rao. When I became chief minister, I had said party politics would not come in the way of maintaining cordial Centre-state relations. And I was able to establish and maintain a good rapport with Rao in Karnataka's interest. It was never done with the intention of gaining his support to become Prime Minister as I never even dreamt of crossing the borders of Karnataka. And I will not allow this relationship to be strained for any reason.

[Rajesh] Does that mean you will protect him in the alleged JMM [Jharkhand Mukti Morcha] MPs' pay-off case and the St Kitt's probe?

[Gowda] Rao has never even mentioned these issues in our conversations. He seems to believe that the law will be left to take its own course. And I would like to make it clear that I won't indulge in political witch-hunting or victimise political opponents. This was my stand even when I took over as chief minister of Karnataka and I have stuck to it. Whatever happens in the country during my tenure is my responsibility and I shall be answerable to the people and their representatives. But I am not interested in wasting my time over what happened in the past. All ongoing inquiries, whether they are being overseen by the courts or other agencies, are not my concern.

[Rajesh] Your stand has been that it was not the intention behind liberalisation but the implementation that resulted in the non-realisation of expected benefits to the people.

[Gowda] I realise I need to invest a lot of time and energy here. We need to eliminate bottlenecks. I need to study the working methodology of the system that involves cabinet sub-committees and such other bodies that create delays. We need to reassure investors about apprehensions they seem to have developed over investing here.

[Rajesh] While the Congress wants its economic policies to be continued, Jyoti Basu has asked you to formulate a new economic policy. How do you plan to handle this issue?

[Gowda] Jyotibabu has asked me to continue attracting investment but keeping in mind interests of the labour class. There won't be any major change in the Congress' economic policy.

[Rajesh] You are expected to come under strong pressure from the US on the signing of the test ban treaty.

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[Gowda] Whatever pressures are applied, our decision will be based on the opinion of our coalition partners. We will examine the pros and cons of signing the treaty and take a decision.

[Rajesh] How different from the Congress foreign policy is yours?

[Gowda] We expect differences when divergent views of the Congress and the Left parties are expressed during decision-making. But I personally feel there are no major areas where our views are so divergent that they cannot be thrashed out. All I have to say is that we will be very cautious in foreign policy matters as it is a very sensitive area.

[Rajesh] The recent elections in Kashmir have been portrayed by the media as forced on the people. Will you go ahead with elections to the state assembly?

[Gowda] I am yet to study the ground situation in Kashmir. I will be able to take a decision on conducting assembly elections only after that.

[Rajesh] Will you follow the policy of reconciliation initiated in Kashmir during the V.P. Singh regime?

[Gowda] It was not just V.P. Singh who followed a reconciliatory policy. Even Rajesh Pilot made similar efforts. Our decision will depend on how fruitful these efforts proved to be.

[Rajesh] All eyes are on you regarding the strategy you will pursue to solve the Cauvery water sharing imbroglio. As Prime Minister, will you be able to remain neutral?

[Gowda] The interests of farmers of both states will be protected as we plan to solve the dispute through negotiations. There can't be one-way traffic here. Both parties to the dispute will have to live with the bounties and hardships that are part of sharing Cauvery water. And considering my selection as leader of the UF to become Prime Minister was widely welcomed in Tamil Nadu, I don't anticipate any suspicion in that state over my role in handling the issue.

[Rajesh] The UF is very vocal about federalism. Which aspects of Centre-state ties are expected to witness upheavals?

[Gowda] We will consider the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission with all seriousness. States will definitely be made to feel more powerful since we plan to follow the Commission's recommendations on sharing revenue and resources.

[Rajesh] As an MP, you fought for fertiliser subsidies. Will you now work to maintain the same subsidy levels considering the resistance from the World Bank and the IMF?

[Gowda] This is a country of agriculturists. We won't go back on our commitment to developmental issues just because there is pressure.

India: New Finance Minister Profiled

BK1106053196 Delhi OUTLOOK in English 12 Jun 96

[Article by A.S. Panneerselvan and Sandipan Deb]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The moment the news came out that P. Chidambaram was the new finance minister, there was a loud whoosh of relief from Indian industry, which had been holding its collective breath as the Deve Gowda Cabinet wrangled for several hours over portfolio allotment on the evening of June 1. For Indian business had been rooting as much as, reportedly, Chidambaram himself that he gets the nation's top economic job. "Everyone in industry is happy," bubbled industrialist Arun Bharat Ram.

"In fact, we have cause for a double celebration. Since he has also been given charge of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, Chidambaram can now push ahead the much-needed modifications to the Companies Act. All administrative problems emanate from some lacunae in this Act," Ram added. Eicher group CEO Subodh Bhargava chimed in: "If any doubts about liberalisation lingered, they have been dispelled with Chidambaram's selection." Others felt that Chidambaram, who had possibly contributed as much to economic reforms as Manmohan Singh but had never got his fair share of credit, was at last getting his rightful place in the sun.

But even as businessmen — both Indian and foreign — were looking at the former commerce minister as a progressive economic thinker firmly committed to unshackle business energy, there were dissenting voices. Chidambaram is an elitist snob, they carped, an ideologically barren turn coat obsessed with his own career goals, the ultimate survivor. "Chidambaram is a most unreliable and amoral person," fumed former Congress MP Mani Shankar Aiyer.

There is little chance that the man himself will ever shed any light on the real Chidambaram. On that evening, as the crowd of journalists waiting outside the Prime Minister's South Block office rushed towards the departing Chidambaram to get an inkling of whether he had got the finance portfolio, one of them, trying to catch him off-guard, asked when he was going to present his budget. Chidambaram stopped momentarily before getting into his car, smiled, and said: "You can't trick me, I'm a lawyer."

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The Elitist Snob: That clipped BBC accent, that cold to-the-point conversation style, that Harvard Law School education, that inherited wealth. Chidambaram comes from the rich trading community of Chettiars, and money-lending is the traditional profession of the Nagarathars, his clan. His immediate family has interests in textiles; A.C. Muthiah of the SPIC group is his cousin. "He has no mass base," sneer his detractors. "He is far more comfortable in suits than in that shirt and veshti he sports." And even in that spotless white Tamil attire, hostile observers see a certain aloof hauteur.

Yet, this is the man who defied family tradition as a young man in two crucial ways — he shunned the family business to become a lawyer, and he married outside his caste. For these twin crimes, he went unforgiven by the Chettiars of Nattukotai for years. He joined the Congress after it lost power in Tamil Nadu in 1967.

When the party split in 1969, he, along with his political mentor C. Subramaniam, chose to remain loyal to Indira Gandhi. In addition to taking charge of the party organ Swadeshamitran, the 25-year-old would accompany Indira on her tours of the state and translate her speeches. Chidambaram's anglicised image hides the fact that in the last 25 years, he alone has been able to match DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] politicos in rousing Tamil oratory. "He was, and is, one of the few Congressmen who can speak Tamil with a certain flourish and elegance," says Valampuri John, a former MP. In fact, his love for Tamil literature is deep. Along with his brothers — Laksmanan and Bharathi — he established Illakiya Chintanai (Literary Thought), a movement that has been credited with identifying a host of original writers in the language.

The No-Ideology Turncoat: "As the minister in charge of the investigation into Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, he knows better than anyone else that there were direct links between the DMK and the assassination. It was for this very reason that the Congress ruled out any alliance with the DMK. But he betrayed the party and joined forces with them," rages Aiyer. Unadulterated jealousy? But there have been enough charges against the new finance minister that he can change ideologies with the felicity of Clark Kent in a phone booth. After all, didn't he come back from the US in the late '60s as a socialist and a strong believer in the command economy? In those heady post-Congress-split days, didn't he, in speech after vitriolic speech, lambast leaders like Kamaraj as "renegade right-wingers", and explain at length to the populace how bank nationalisation would usher in an unmatched era of rural prosperity? And some of those articles of his in Swadeshamitran — don't they sound rather like what CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] ideologue Prakash Karat says today? And notice, too, that while he emerged as the principal young votary of state control, as a lawyer, his clients were the very blue chip corporations that supposedly stood against all his socialistic beliefs.

So when 'liberalisation' became the buzzword, Chidambaram dug a deep hole and buried his past there and emerged overnight as the commerce minister who would tear down every trade barrier to take India into a globalised future, say his detractors. "I hope the country's economic fate will be safe in the hands of a man who has demonstrated a notorious capacity for shifting loyalties.

Chidambaram, who is only interested in his own ends, has so far changed parties four times," says Aiyer.

The fourfold shift is a huge exaggeration. For, Chidambaram has always been with the Congress — starting off with the C.Subramaniam faction, and now with the G.K. Moopanar breakaway group. And about the lawyer called Chidambaram, he has never made a secret of the fact that he has not allowed his political career affect his legal one, and is genuinely proud of his ability to make a good living independent of his politics.

"He started changing his beliefs gradually over time, and became a strong votary of liberalisation in the mid-'80s when Rajiv Gandhi was prime minister. But there is nothing wrong in changing your beliefs with the times," says former Cabinet colleague and Congress(T) leader Rangarajan Kumaramangalam. "It's unfair to rake up his past as most of us were enamoured of Fabian socialism in the 1970s," says V. Raghuraman, secretary-general, ASSOCHAM.

"Even Dr Manmohan Singh was a confirmed socialist. The face of all Communist countries is changing, with privatisation recognised as the right path. So what is the shame in Singh or Chidambaram changing tack?"

Right after the swearing in, Chidambaram chats with Finance Secretary Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

The Ultimate Survivor: When Chidambaram joined the team led by the late Mohan Kumaramangalam to break the DMK in 1972, he could hardly have imagined that 24 years later, he would be contesting elections with the support of M.Karunanidhi. In fact, in the formative years of MGR's [referring to M.G. Ramachandran] party ADMK [Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] (as it was then known), he was one of the liaison men between MGR and Indira Gandhi. Proximity to MGR fetched him a parliamentary ticket — he won the seat — in 1977. But in the 1980 elections, Mrs Gandhi dumped MGR and chose Karunanidhi as her Tamil

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Nadu partner. Chidambaram was denied a ticket. He waited out the early '80s calmly, without getting into the internecine crossfire between then AICC [All India Congress Committee] general secretary G.K. Moopanar and then Union finance minister R. Venkataraman.

Chidambaram's Harvard background and urban polish, however, fitted Rajiv Gandhi's dream of a youthful Congress to a T. And with his refusal of the first ministerial post offered to him — Chidambaram pointed out that since his family was in the textile business, there would be a conflict of interest if he became minister of state for textiles — endeared him to the prime minister. He was accommodated in the home ministry. As the Indo- Sri Lanka crisis escalated, he became Rajiv's key emissary to MGR. But when Jayalalitha came to power, in 1992, he became the first Central minister to be attacked by AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] goons. He escaped narrowly, the window-panes of his cars smashed, but kept his cool and did not go against the party high command's directives. More recently, it had become starkly obvious to everyone except P.V. Narasimha Rao that an alignment with Jayalalitha's AIADMK would be political suicide for any Tamil Congressman. Only then did the man who had drafted the official Congress manifesto reluctantly decide that he had to fight the Congress candidate at Sivaganga. "People may call him a snob, but he is intelligent enough to gauge the currents. He is pragmatic enough and not one to get caught in delusions with value systems that are not relevant to the times," says Kumaramangalam.

The Economic Thinker: What Chidambaram's detractors don't like is that, as the votary of bank nationalisation and abolition of the privy purses in the early '70s, and while justifying the Emergency in the mid-'70s, defending the Defamation Bill in the late '80s, discovering the virtues of market forces in the early '90s, and finally articulating the need for a federal polity, he has always seemed to be on the winning side. But then you could also call him simply a loyal Congressman, except in the last few months.

As he moves into the office he has coveted — and Indian business has hoped he would get — the new finance minister would surely know that he has to do a tightrope walk tougher than anything Manmohan Singh had to undertake. And with the economy teetering on a critical midcliff ledge, his task would perhaps be far more complex too. As commerce minister, the world got the feeling that this man instinctively believed in whatever the reforms stood for. And he enjoyed his work. Hence all those hopes. Can he deliver?

"Despite the different pulls and pressures from the various constituents of the United Front, we believe that the finance minister will not let economic reforms go astray," says Arun Bharat Ram. "Though, because of the internal contradictions of the United Front, he may not be able to push the reforms as much as he would want to, and may have to concede some things." Says industrialist K.K. Modi: "By definition, I think his job will be very difficult since he has to find a common path between different ideologies. He is handling a very important ministry which has a cascading effect on the economy, so he must be careful and be able to carry them along." But the bottomline, businessmen believe, is firmly positive. "Of course, he will have to go by consensus and collective decisions of the Cabinet and find a way out of the opposition he may encounter on certain issues like PSU divestment and restructuring. But the scenario is now definitely more positive than when there was first talk of the United Front forming the government," says Bhargava.

While other politicians have nurtured mass bases founded on demographics, Chidambaram has been assiduously carving out his own constituency in Indian polity — management of the nation's economy. The newcomer in North Block would surely know that never has an Indian finance minister come into his job with the hopes and best wishes of so many riding with him; Manmohan Singh, after all, was an unknown quantity when he took over. Ideologically barren, turncoat survivor, elitist snob, for the sake of the Indian economy, P. Chidambaram must refute these allegations with his actions. That is the mandate the nation has given him.

India: Finance Minister Rules Out Privatization of Insurance

BK1206091996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The finance minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, has ruled out privatization of the life insurance or the general insurance. Resuming the discussion on the confidence motion in the Lok Sabha today, [12 June] he said on the contrary, the government proposes to strengthen these public sector corporations. Rebutting the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] charges in this regard, the finance minister said that what the United Front proposed in its common minimum program is to restructure the insurance sector in the light of the experience in the banking sector, where both public and private sector coexists.

Asserting that the mandate of the people is for a coalition between parties which shares on basic values, Mr. Chidambaram said the United Front worked hard

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for evolving a pragmatic program for the people. He said the government is confident of implementing the program which will take the country forward. [passage omitted]

India: Article on Decision To Acquire SU-30 for Indian Air Force

BK0906073196 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 8 Jun 96 p 11

[Article by P.K. Vasudeva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Controversy still surrounds the Narasimha Rao government's decision, during its last days in power, to go in for the Russian built Sukhoi-30 MK combat aircraft to strengthen the strike capability of the Indian Air Force [IAF]. Several political parties including the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the Janata Dal protested the timing of the deal which is to cost more than Rs [rupees] 6,000 crore in six years saying that the aircraft only existed on the drawing board.

Defence experts are also divided over the aircraft's capabilities. While there has been some controversy about the best choice for a multi-role aircraft, experts feel that the French 2000-5 which Pakistan is trying to procure from France is the other contender.

The bulk of the IAF combat strength still consists of the ageing MIG-21 variants. Some of these, of the "Bis" variety, are awaiting an expensive up gradation. The others are increasingly becoming a liability, given their limitations of range, firepower and electronics, and a high accident rate. While accepting that a piece-to-piece replacement for these aircraft was too expensive, the IAF and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) pleaded that they could make do with a smaller number of high-performance, multi-role aircraft.

The new aircraft has been considered to replace MIG-27M. It is superior to this with China, and even the less capable MIG-29 with the IAF.

The SU-30MK is a large two seater aircraft with a 34-tonne take-off weight which makes it that much more expensive. There is no comparable Western aircraft that can match its fly away cost. All claims that its life cycle cost-all costs during the SU-30 MK's operating life-are three times those of the Eurofighter 2000, seem to be exaggerated. However, because of its comparatively low engine and avionics life, high maintenance and spare requirements, high fuel consumption besides other similar factors, the cost could be higher than the Western fourth-generation fighters, which should be a worrisome point for the IAF and the MOD.

A question arises: Can the IAF which already has seven types of combat air crafts, afford an eighth type? SU-30 MK is derived from the family of Su-27UB, SU-32FN two-seat strike aircraft, and the Su-33 with folding wings for aircraft carrier operations. Su-35 multi-role fighter is a superior version of Su-30MK and is now under development.

With the same dimensions as the SU-27UB, the more potent SU-30MK is heavier and has two more external weapons attachment points, for a total of 12. It has a formidable war-load of 8,000 kgs, involving an array of missiles for long and medium range and close-in air ground and anti-ship missiles, TV-guided missiles, guided precision munitions, and the like.

SU-30 MK can accurately hit surface targets up to 120 KM away, fire at two aerial targets simultaneously and extend endurance to ten hours through in-flight refuelling. It can also be equipped with western weapon systems. Thus India could have the option to fit the very potent Matra Magic missiles, carried by Mirage 2000s, on this aircraft for reasons of commonality. The latest Russian missile meant for this aircraft is more cost effective.

Interestingly, SU-35, the derivative of SU-30MK, has gone into production and has a considerable improvement in its performances. The single-seater SU-35 is even longer than the two seat SU-30MK, and is probably heavier too. It is also faster (2500km/hr), has a longer range (4000km) for the same war-load because of its more powerful engine, AL-35F.

The biggest gain is from its advanced avionics. Its powerful new Phanzotron No 11 Multi mode radar permits the detection of aerial target up to 400 km range and surface targets up to 120 km. This radar can track up to 15 targets at a time and simultaneously engage up to six, which is the maximum in avionics of the latest aircraft of Eurofighters.

It is interesting to note that at the Paris air show the X-31 aircraft awe struck the spectators, when it flew at a 70 degrees angle of attack (called alpha). But the SU-35 can fly up to 110 degrees, which enhances its maneuverability over other aircrafts of the world. The SU-35's subconic radius of turn is 450, meters which is slightly more than the Eurofighter 2000.

Now the question arises: When a superior SU-35 will be available is the forseeable future, how is it that the choice has fallen on SU-30 MK? Moreover, what was the need to hurry up such a heavy investment of Rs 6,310 crore in six years and making an advance payment of Rs 500 crore.

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The choice has fallen on a multi-role SU-30 which Russia has offered to custom-build for the IAF, modifying the original Su-30K ADV (Air Defence Variance) which was primarily meant for interception and escort missions.

The Sukhoi Design Bureau produces some of the world's finest air crafts. The SU-35 is the only derivative of fourth-generation fighter and the cost is also not much higher than Su-30MK, hence India should have gone in for SU-35 multi-role fourth-generation aircraft. Even now it should bid for it, because the change over from SU-30 MK to SU-35 is smooth while offering a considerable improvement in performance. If there was any compelling reason to sign a defence contract in the midst of elections, the then prime minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, should have taken the leaders of the opposition parties into confidence.

Iran

Iran: 3 People Arrested on Charges of Spying for U.S.

NC1106081596 Paris AFP in English 0800 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 11 (AFP) -Iranian authorities have arrested three people on charges of spying for the United States during Iran's 1980-1988 war against Iraq, a senior official said Tuesday [11 June].

Mohammad 'Ali Yunesi, the head of the judiciary section of the armed forces, charged the suspects had passed on military information to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

They also had links with a foreign embassy in Iran, he said, without revealing the nationality of the suspects or the date of their arrest. The foreign mission was not identified either.

Iran has repeatedly accused the United States of siding with Iraq during the war and providing it with military information about Iran.

The Iranian parliament last month approved a change to the law laying down the death sentence for anyone found guilty of spying especially for its arch-enemies the United States and Israel.

Iran: Paper Views 'Virtual Fiasco' of U.S. Trade Sanctions

LD1006212096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 8 Jun 96 pp 2, 15

["Opinion Column" article: "U.S. Trade Embargo: How Effective After a Year?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On 6 June 1995, Bill Clinton announced an economic sanction against Iran seeking two major objectives: paralyzing Iran economically and isolating it politically.

However, in retrospect, the United States seems to have failed to achieve the above objectives. To clarify the matter, the United States used to buy about one-fourth of Iran's total oil exports. Following the trade embargo, not only did it stop purchasing Iran's petroleum, it also asked all American companies to abstain from selling the oil equipment needed for the Iranian oil industry.

Indeed, aware of the fact that oil exports constitute 80 percent of Iran's total foreign revenue, and, therefore, cognizant of the crucial role of the oil income in Iran's economy, the United States waged the economic war hoping to bring the Islamic government to its knees.

In response and in order to counter-balance the U.S. hostile move, Iran quickly replaced the American buyers of its crude with new customers from other countries. Also, through the skill and innovation of the Iranian experts, the oil industry has continued its operation without interruption. Thus, Washington is facing a virtual fiasco in its economic war against Iran.

As a token of the U.S. failure in accomplishing its second hostile goal, isolating Iran in the international community, the Islamic government hosted scores of heads of state or high ranking officials from more than forty countries a couple of weeks ago when the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tedzhen railroad was inaugurated successfully. Those shrewd among the U.S. officials have already realized this. That is why they insist on punishing the companies that establish trade ties with Iran. But what have they achieved so far?

They have only brought the wrath of the EU [European Union], Russia, Japan and almost all other countries of the world. Nearly all countries on the planet earth have protested against the U.S. bullying, which manifested in slapping sanctions on other countries for political ends.

The civilized community believes that trade war, sanctions and baseless accusations should not be used as avenues to achieve political objectives.

The EU and other economic giants of the world shoulder a heavy responsibility in thwarting the U.S. trade

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blackmail. If, today, the United States applies trade sanctions against the Third World countries, tomorrow it may apply them against the developed countries, including the EU and Japan.

The modern world has undergone a substantial change in the areas of economy and politics compared with just a few decades ago. The United States had better try to understand these changes rather than seek to misrepresent and oppose independent and sovereign states, such as the Islamic Iran, projecting them as pariah states to no avail.

Iran: Commentary on U.S. Efforts To Impose 'Secondary Boycott'

LD1106141196 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 6 Jun 96 p 4

[Commentary by "Mahyar Emami": "Blackmailing the Islamic Republic of Iran"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to latest media reports, Senator Alfonse D'Amato, who has taken on himself the role of a kind of Zionist fifth column in the United States, has intensified his efforts regarding the secondary boycott of Iran. Senator D'Amato has also sent a letter to the French Oil Company TOTAL, requesting the cancellation of TOTAL's contract with Iran for development and production of oil and gas from Sirri fields. So far, TOTAL has disregarded American pressure to stop the 600 million dollars oil deal with Iran which was signed after the demise of the Conocco agreement.

French TOTAL is among the twelve major oil companies in the world.

On 20th December 1995, the "Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1995" was passed by the US Senate. The bill has recently been introduced in the House of Representatives for approval.

In recent months, European countries have sent clear messages to the United States, to tell them that the imposition of sanctions against Europeans doing business with Iran is against international law and that Europe will retaliate by imposing similar sanctions on American companies.

However, no-one would be surprised if the US Congress approves the bill for secondary boycott of Iran, considering the fact that international law has never been a priority in USA.

In fact ever since early 1995, many patriotic Americans have publicly said that US economic embargo on Iran is not in the best interests of the United States. "I am concerned that we are shooting ourselves in the foot", said a high-ranking American official in May 1995. There is in fact no evidence whatever that US ever tried since 1979 to assure the Iranians that harming political independence, territorial integrity and national interests of Iran are not the true aims of American foreign policy.

Recent history suggests that nothing is impossible.

Even Germany that terrorized much of the world during World War II, has long been enjoying the world's confidence and respect. However, winning such a confidence and respect requires vision and patriotism.

Violent actions, suspicious policies, economic embargoes, allocation of funds for covert operations, etc., against other countries are certainly not the sort of actions that will be helpful. It is obvious that any country which seeks to act as the world's boss, tries to impose its will on millions of people around the world and interferes in the internal affairs of other independent nations cannot expect to win the world's friendship and respect and does not deserve to do so.

Iran: Velayati Refutes Bahrain's Claim of Interference

LD1106091796 Tehran IRNA in English 0805 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 11, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati here Monday [10 June] refuted Manama's baseless claims of Iran's involvement in Bahrain's internal affairs, saying this was the easiest way to justify the problems but certainly not the best solution.

In an interview with the morning daily 'IRAN' printed Tuesday, he noted that the Bahraini issue is an internal one, but that country's government is trying to solve its problems by making accusations against other countries.

The roots as well as the solutions to Bahrain's problems exist in their own country, he underlined.

Calling on Manama to refrain from adopting a harsh attitude against its opponents, Velayati stated that roughness in dealing with opposition groups would not resolve anything. He urged the Bahraini Government to open dialog with opposition groups and settle the existing difficulties through peaceful and just negotiations.

He further voiced Iran's readiness to mediate in order to establish peace and tranquility in that country.

The Iranian foreign minister, who returned to the country yesterday from a two-day official visit to Syria, stressed that the coming to power of the new party in Israel proved falsity of the assumption by those who thought relations with the Zionist regime may enable

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them to recover parts of their rights. They were wrong in their notion and they should have talked with the Zionist regime in a different language, he said.

As to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's message to his Syrian counterpart, Hafiz al-Asad, Velayati said the message expressed support for Syria, which is a frontline state in confrontation with the Zionist regime.

Expressing satisfaction over his talks with Syrian authorities, Velayati emphasized that Iran is for strengthening positions which stand against expansionist policies of the Zionists.

Iran: Newspaper Urges Muslims To Decide Fate of Jerusalem

LD1106143396 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 8 Jun 96 p 2

[Unattributed article: "Forget USA and Let Islamic World Decide Fate of Qods"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Disillusioned with tough statements made by Israel's extremist Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu, Arab leaders are holding summits to shape a new strategy to save the Middle East peace process which started in 1993 on the initiative of the United States.

Leaders of Jordan, Egypt and Palestinian last week met in the Red Sea port of Aqaba in the Hashemite Kingdom [of Jordan] and desperately agreed to follow a "wait-and-see" policy while facing hardened rhetoric from Netanyahu who is now prime minister-in-waiting as a result of 29th May elections in Israel.

Now, in Damascus, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak yesterday [7 June] began what they called a mini-summit.

The three-day mini-summit is billed as a launching pad for a full-scale Arab summit which has not been held since Iraq's August 1990 invasion and the subsequent occupation of Kuwait which deeply divided the Arab countries.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the presence of Crown Prince 'Abdallah of Saudi Arabia in Damascus demonstrates that King Fahd is no longer in command in Riyadh.

And the Arab summit: Though the U.S. President Bill Clinton, Jordan's King Husayn and Egypt's Husni Mubarak wasted no time in portraying Netanyahu as a "peace-loving" leader, but we in this column warned the Arab world on the second day of the Likud victory of the Israeli plot against the Islamic world.

'IRAN NEWS', in the past, presented the only viable solution to the Middle East problem i.e., full restoration of the Palestinian people's rights and the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425 which call for the Zionist regime to vacate occupied Arab lands.

At this crucial juncture of the peace process, we would like to remind the Arab leaders that the issue of Palestine is a matter which deeply concerns the Islamic world as a whole, not just the Arab world.

Arab leaders should not allow Netanyahu to ridicule Islamic issues through his contradictory rhetoric. He claims to want to continue the peace process, but insists that he would not give land concessions to Palestinians and won't return the Golan Heights to Syria.

Arab leaders should note that American mediation has lost credibility and one should expect more desperate moves from the White House in the days to come because of the US presidential elections scheduled for November.

It is but natural that Arab leaders should forget the United States and present the Palestine and related issues before the Islamic world. They should let the representatives of one of the billion Muslims, from more than fifty Muslim countries, shape the future strategy for acquiring Muslim's genuine rights...[ellipses as published] to regain control of one of the holiest places in Islam, the first Qibla or the Holy Qods.

Iran: Commentary Views Efforts of Supporters of Zionism

LD1006215596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 6 Jun 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Useless Efforts To Forget The Danger Posed by Zionism"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Covert and overt supporters of Zionism have been making joint efforts recently in the region and their main aim is to make people forget the danger of Zionism. [passage omitted]

It should not be forgotten that the compromise process between the Arabs and the Zionists has reached a deadlock since the result of elections for the Zionist regime was announced. Now that the Likud Party has come to power, the Zionists have said their final word, and have shown that they will not sufficiently consider any responses, no matter how flexible, bowing, and abject they may be.

In such circumstances, when the propaganda machinery of the Arab reactionary front becomes active against the

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Islamic Republic of Iran, it can be interpreted as a green light to the Zionists. It is a sign that the Arab reactionary front has announced its subservience to the Zionists.

It is very obvious that the current crisis facing the Bahraini regime will not be solved by propaganda and sensationalism; however, the existing facts and evidence show that mercenary publications in the region take good care of their mission and are trying to win the favorable opinion of the new Israeli Government and to prove that the Zionists can count on them. The government of the UAE knowingly or unwillingly is following a wrong track and has been exploited to serve the Zionists.

It should not be forgotten that in all spheres, overt and covert Egyptian elements are engaged in directing the stage behind the scenes. They in fact give instructions and want to show their efficiency to the Likud Party. They want to tell the Likud Party that if the Labor party and Shim'on Peres, who were thinking of direct negotiations with the Arabs, failed to achieve anything, it is in the interests of the Likud Party to work with the Arabs with the help of the Egyptians. As the saying goes: "A thief who comes with a torch will pick up the best goods." Therefore, if the Likud Party enters the Arab countries with the help and guidance of the Egyptians, the latter will benefit more and do better.

Iran: Velayati on Relations With Syria, Struggle Against Israel

LD1006144996 Tehran IRNA in English 1412 GMT 10 June 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, 10 June (IRNA) — The foreign minister said on Monday [10 June] that the coming to power of a new party in Israel proved to those supposing that they might regain parts of their denied rights through compromise with the Zionists that they were mistaken and that they should speak to that regime in a different language.

Speaking to reporters at Tehran airport upon his return from a two-day visit to Syria, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said that the Israeli regime had not abandoned its initial goal of establishing an empire extending from the nile to the euphrates.

Velayati said there were no basic difference between the two Israeli parties, because their long-term objectives were based on the further domination of the Zionists over the region.

He said the main goal behind his two-day official visit to Syria was to submit a message from President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to his Syrian counterpart Hafiz al-Assad declaring Iran's support for Syria as the most important country on the forefront of the struggle against Israel.

He stated that his talks with the Syrian president and with Foreign Affairs Minister Faruq al-Shar' were "satisfactory" in view of recent developments in the zionist regime.

He added that the Iranian and Syrian presidents exchange messages whenever there is an important development in the region in order to adopt joint decisions.

Referring to the convening of the recent summit meeting of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia on recent developments in the region, Velayati said that another summit is to be held in Cairo in the next two weeks on a wider scale.

Iran: Larijani Stresses Link Between Iran, Islamic World

NC1106154896 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 1 Jun 96 p 20

[Commentary by Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani: "The Fifth Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

Today the fifth Majles begins deliberations. It is a major source of pride for us deputies this term, that we enjoy the trust of the dear Iranian nation. The way to express our gratitude for this bounty is first to comprehend the magnitude of the task we have undertaken and second to take fitting steps in this regard.

We must not forget that the Majles is one of the most important institutions of the Islamic government and that we have congregated to revive Islamic thinking in administrative affairs. There is a particular criterion for keeping religion alive in government and that is the "Velayat-e Faqih" rule by the supreme jurisconsult. This means that the Majles' obligations, its legitimacy, and true worth will be measured against this criterion.

We should perform our obligations with the maximum efficiency — in keeping with the dignity of the Majles. The Majles is the venue for decisionmaking and this should be the backdrop for showing human understanding of issues and the level of commitment to the correct path.

To all appearances, it seems to be a mere exercise in standing and sitting, but even this requires a massive effort if it is to be done properly. The Vali-ye Amr and the nation have put their confidence in us so that we can formulate the annual government budget and the method of allocating funds, so that we can supervise the correct implementation of laws to prevent violations.

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The accounting affairs tribunal is supervised by the Majles so that it can keep track of every expenditure from the Exchequer so that nothing is spent illegally.

Hence our debates in the Majles should be dignified. The Majles is the arena for deputies to challenge each other — to obtain the best opinions and decisions. It is a kind of mirror reflecting our steadfastness, sufficiency, and farsightedness for others through our debates.

As mentioned, the source of the Majles' responsibility stems from its participation in establishing and consolidating an Islamic government and forging ahead.

The renaissance of Islam has taken place around the axis of a great social movement in today's world, a movement not limited to any particular geographical region. Wherever there is a member of the Islamic ummah, the idea of the revival of Islam has occurred to him. This magnificent movement is facing much contention to which the younger generation should pay attention. This is especially necessary for the new crop of intelligentsia in the Islamic ummah. This refers to those who believe that the welfare of the ummah lies in the revival of religion and that the most important pillar of religion's existence is a government based on Islam. Those who propagate secular bases for urban life at the end of the 20th century — as the modern West prepares for the period beyond — are advocating a precept that is 400 years older than and historically backward compared with what we have today. Our woes today cannot be resolved by rechewing the cud already chewed by others a thousand times.

Our problems have only one solution and that is the full-fledged revival of religion in individual and collective life. The relationship between this movement and Islamic Iran is unique and important. The worldwide Islamic renaissance movement is indebted to the Islamic Revolution of Iran and to His Eminence Imam Khomeyni (may God be pleased with him). Whatever we do in Iran has an important simultaneous impact on the movement. Hence each individual in Iran today should keep his Islamic identity — of over 200 years — in mind, in addition to his national identity.

The world of infidels seeks to obliterate this identity, and you can enumerate a myriad such cases and contentions facing the Islamic world and the relationship with Islamic Iran. One of the most important is that of reconstruction, that is, how to transform dear Islamic Iran into a prosperous, strong, and flourishing country. Domestic development programs are the best reflection of this lofty objective and the fifth Majles must formulate our Third [Five-Year] Plan for development and base the government's direction on it.

Development demands a correct program and discipline in implementing it. Both these factors are complex and demand great interrelated and organized specialization and efficiency. By relying on the strong rope of the Velayat-e Faqih, the way will be smoothed for us, God willing.

Iran: Afghan Deputy Prime Minister Seeks Continuation of Aid

LD1006153896 Tehran IRNA in English 1459 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 10, IRNA — Visiting Afghan Deputy Prime Minister Seyyed Mohamad 'Ali Javid here Monday [10 June] called on Iran to continue its humanitarian assistance to his country as well as its mediation to solve the Afghan crisis.

Making the plea in a meeting with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, he termed the outcome of his talks with Iranian officials on activating Tehran-Kabul Joint Economic Commission as fruitful.

While submitting President Rafsanjani a message from his Afghan counterpart Borhanoddin Rabbani, Javid also gave a report on the political, economic, military and social conditions in Afghanistan.

President Rafsanjani on his part underlined that the Iranian Government and nation attach importance to the destiny of the Muslim people of Afghanistan. He stressed the need for unity and solidarity among all Afghan groups.

The president said the restoration of peace and stability to Afghanistan will help expedite the country's reconstruction and alleviate the sufferings of the Afghan people.

He welcomed expansion of Tehran-Kabul ties and cooperation within the framework of their joint economic commission.

Iran: Paper Views Prospects for Turkey, Army's Role

LD1006194696 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 8 Jun 96 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed commentary: "The Future of Turkey"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The differences of opinion between Tansu Ciller and Mesut Yilmaz have caused the collapse of the government of the "Motherland [Party]" in Turkey.

Suleyman Demirel, the Turkish president, asked Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Welfare Party, to form a government. However, the current structure

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of the Turkish parliament and Turkey's international position, especially in the European community, are not working in favor of Erbakan.

Suleyman Demirel is not concerned about the politicians who are refusing to form a coalition government but is worried about the hidden role of the army.

The Turkish Army has always played an active role in the political life of that country. Its latest role was to help General Kenan Evren to come to power in the late 1980's.

For the West, the current Turkish Army does not have the role it used to have during the cold war. However, the Iraqi crisis and Israel's intentions in the region have given it new possibilities.

At the same time, a country which is incapable of any move without foreign economic assistance and investment cannot afford to witness the repeated collapse of governments and rows and reconciliation among the politicians.

This is why the Turkish Army is able, to some extent, to win over public opinion. At the same time, one should not ignore the point that new friends of the Turkish Army, including Israel, do not want the Muslims to come to power.

Therefore, Erbakan should be vigilant more than at any other time because if efforts to form a government and even to hold early elections are not successful, it will only prepare the ground for the army to return to power.

Iran: Mohsen Hashemi Appointed Head of Presidential Office

LD1006175896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 10 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a ceremony organized today to say farewell to Seyyed Hoseyn Mar'ashi [as head of the presidential office] and to introduce [his successor] Engineer Mohsen Hashemi [President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has a son with the same name], the president said: The presidential office should be managed efficiently so as to create dynamism and harmony among the executive systems in the country.

The president stressed: When we are geared to improving matters toward perfection, it does not matter who we are and where we are working. Our principle is to work for God and the people. When we work for God, moments, days, permanent and temporary posts become meaningless. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed: When we are in a position of responsibility, we must take it seriously. God is watching our every step, and will question us for every minor and major issue.

Iran: TEHRAN TIMES Stresses Need To Resist Enemy Pressures

LD0806! `3396 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Jun 96 p2

[Editorial entitled: "Principled Resistance — the Enemies' Nemesis"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Seven years ago, Imam Khomeyni bade his beloved nation farewell and left for his heavenly abode.

But even before the imam had passed away, the enemies of the Islamic revolution, the seeds of which were planted by the imam, openly predicted the revolution to crumble after his demise. The enemies apparently misjudged the strength of the national will, the motives that guided the revolution and the people's determination to safeguard it by thwarting the plots of tenacious enemies.

At ceremonies marking seven years of the imam's departure, the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, called on the country's responsible officials and the nation not to forsake old values, notably the determination to resist enemy plots which he considered the key to final victory.

From the early days of the inception of the Islamic revolution, enemies have tried, by all possible means, to pressure Iran to compromise on the principles that guided the Islamic Revolution to victory.

In its short history, the path which the Islamic revolution has taken has not been smooth. Many are those who desire to see compromise and flexibility in the way the country is run. But experience is the best teacher and has, time and again, proven that flexibility will only lead to compromise and compromise to capitulation. Enemies will not hesitate to exploit any perceived weakness so as to pressure the Islamic Republic to give in to their demands, licit or illicit.

The enemies of the Islamic Republic will never enter into a one-to-one deal, not to say deals which they see no opportunity to weaken the other end. Countries of global arrogance always pin the blame on the Islamic Republic for their policy failures in this part of the globe and, with more determination, try to exploit any position of weakness.

Truth of the matter is, the enemy will never succeed in this part of the world unless it succeeds in wiping out the Islamic revolution through different stages. To do this it has to start by weakening it. Beware! Flexibility and compromise are its tools! The process?

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Conquer the bulwarks of resistance one after another through compromise — from a lesser issue to a bigger one until the walls of resistance finally crumble. This we have witnessed in not a few instances. Whenever and wherever we show softness the enemy enhances pressure by exploiting all possible fronts.

Thus, the key to preserving the ideals of the revolution is by strengthening resistance in two fronts — political and economic.

In the political front, we can raise our morale by increasing the number of our friends — those who are ready to deal with us on an equal footing as sovereign, independent states. To further test this morale, we can win friends from the fold of our enemies. The role that dialogue plays here cannot be overemphasized. By talking to our enemies, we can at least gain their respect, if not their acceptance of our ideals.

On the economic front, besides increasing our sources of income and raw materials the first move would be to lay down the foundations of a self-reliant economy. As the saying goes, "Charity begins at home." Through weal and woe we can lift the country up in no-nonsense programs and methods by starting to identify our areas of weakness and more importantly, sources of corruption.

Falling short of achieving these two targets, we have nobody to blame but ourselves. The revolution shall have been fought in vain.

Iran: Paper Reports on Election of New Majles Presidium

LD1106103596 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 6 Jun 96 p 12

[Unattributed report: "On the Sidelines of the Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The election of a presidium is one of the most important tasks undertaken by the Majles at the start of its work. Yesterday, the election for the permanent [one year] presidium was conducted in a very sensitive and competitive climate, and all the rumors, guesses, and assumptions of recent weeks about the management of the Majles were brought to an end. This election, which reveals how many deputies support each of the groups, led to a strengthening of the votes of the Rowhaniyat [Militant Clergy Association] at yesterday's session.

Yesterday, protests were made against the credentials of some of the deputies and further investigation was referred to the investigation committee, but, a few moments later, through the intervention of a number of deputies, most of the protestors changed their minds and the said credentials were discussed once again and approved. However, in the midst of all this deputy for Tehran, Dr. Sheybani, was alone, despite mediation efforts by deputies, in refusing to change his mind and persisted in calling for further investigation into the credentials of several deputies.

Deputy for Kerman Hoseyn Mar'ashi spent a great deal of time in the last two or three Majles sessions going back and forth across the floor of the Majles and talking to the deputies. He — apparently in his capacity as the administrator of the Servants of Construction Group — has engaged in extensive efforts in recent days to persuade deputies to vote for presidium candidates of the servants group and other members of the coalition supporting this group. A media correspondent who had gone to the Majles to ask people's opinions about the message of the eminent leader [Khamene'i], went to him and asked for his view. Mar'ashi replied "I am only thinking of the presidium election at this moment and I am not giving interviews."

Yesterday, in the interval between the morning and afternoon sessions, he made extensive efforts regarding the presidium election and spoke to many deputies.

An hour before the start of the afternoon session he told parliamentary correspondents: I predict that votes for our group have increased by 20 in comparison with Sunday, [2 June] whereas the actual votes cast by the deputies showed a drop of 13 in the votes cast for the speaker proposed by the servants.

According to some overheard remarks made by deputies, some ministers have personally contacted some deputies in recent days and made certain suggestions regarding votes for presidium candidates of the servants. However, despite all these efforts and despite promises made, along with extensive sums [as published], in this regard, things turned out contrary to the predictions and none of the candidates of the servants group found their way to the presidium. After the announcement of the presidium election results yesterday, a sense of shock and anger could be seen on the faces of servants group activists.

On Wednesday [5 June], when the credentials of Fa'ezeh Hashemi [President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's daughter] were discussed in the Majles, deputy for Mashhad Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammad Reza Faker said: I will not protest against her as a mark of respect for Hashemi-Rafsanjani. As a reaction to this, when the credentials of Faker were discussed, deputy for Ahvaz Bayanak said: I was going to protest, but since he is a clergyman I won't!

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Iran: Khamene'i Addresses 27th Army Division Troops

LD0906154196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 9 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This morning the esteemed leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, commander in chief of the armed forces, participated in the morning parade ceremony of the various units of the victorious 27th Army Division of Muhammad Rasul Allah [Muhammad, God's prophet — Persian: Lashgar-e bist-o-haft-e Muhammad Rasul Allah] may God's peace and benedictions be upon him and his scion.

The esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution, in the course of a speech, emphasized the determining role of spirituality, sincerity, and faith in the efficiency of military units. He said: The best equipped troops and armies are not efficient without spirituality, sincerity, and faith and, by the same token, the most religious armies will not be efficient without organization and good management.

The esteemed leader described the 27th Army Division of Muhammad Rasul Allah, God's peace and benedictions be upon him and his scion, as a collective that was brimming with earnest, religious, and spiritual individuals, saying: There is nothing greater for a nation than for its youth to recognize the path of correctness and salvation and to follow it resolutely and earnestly. We therefore thank God, with all our being, for having made us aware of the realities at such a juncture in time, and turned us into the ummah [community] and followers of His true, outstanding, and virtuous servant, that is, the Imam Khomeyni, may God Almighty be satisfied with him. [passage omitted]

The esteemed leader praised the discipline and efforts made by the army division to repair, maintain, build, produce, and innovate, saying: A military unit will achieve real strength when it succeeds in uniting faith and earnestness with discipline, training, military know-how, repair, maintenance, and organizational and management capabilities. Today, the 27th Muhammad Rasul Allah Army Division enjoys such a position.

The commander in chief stressed that it was important for the armed forces to be able to understand and correctly analyze facts and realities as a point of policy. He said: The existence of an efficient and wise military force is vital for the great Iranian nation and to achieve this, it is necessary for our armed forces to properly analyze and understand the realities clearly. Therefore the first prerequisite of war is to have knowledge. Our Armed Forces should be knowledgeable, wise, trained, disciplined, and organized; they should enjoy good management and command as well as efficient and powerful [Persian: tavana] equipment so that they may be counted as a deserving force for the great Iranian nation.

After the esteemed leader's speech, the units based in the compound marched past the holy Koran and the esteemed leader.

Iran: Azeri Students Appeal to Rafsanjani on Language Issue

LD1006200696 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 8 Jun 96 p 2

[Report from the column entitled: "Parties, Societies and Groups: "Azeri Students' Letters to the President"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of Azeri students from the country's universities have sent a letter to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani and asked him to seriously confront the efforts by a number of individuals who are trying to create division among our country's Muslim people.

The letter reads, in part: The entire efforts of those individuals are directed at one issue, that is to say the one who wants to revive his mother tongue is a separatist and non-Iranian.

Referring to Principles 15 and 19 of the constitution and asking for the president's assistance, the Azeri students add: We are the people who enriched the history of Iran by offering highly memorable heroes and further enhanced Iran's dignity and glory. We are well aware of our national duty in protecting and maintaining the territorial integrity of this country.

Iran: Daily Awaits Written Notice of Legal Infringement

LD0806214896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 26 May 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Written Notice!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last week the Press Supervisory Board announced the outcome of its last meeting. The verdict read that the PAYAM-E DANESHJU [Student Message] was to be closed down and that written notices had been sent to a number of publications, including SALAM, on account of some legal offenses.

SALAM first heard of this news through the evening newspapers and then a fax was received from the Ministry of Islamic Guidance which did not add anything to the news reported in the newspapers. SALAM, which, like all the readers, had no knowledge of the text of this written notice or the instances of infringements of the law, reported this news exactly as it was and waited to receive the Press Supervisory Board's letter so that it

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may understand how it had infringed the law, and if it had indeed violated the law, why were the competent judicial authorities not dealing with this case? Why a written notice?

The days went by one by one last week and there was no sign of the written notice. We told ourselves that they were probably quite busy and that it would take a few days at least for the text of the notice to be prepared, typed and edited, retyped and signed, then given a reference number and delivered to the courier who would then deliver it to the editorial staff of SALAM. So, we expected this written notice to reach us on the first day of the following week. But, yesterday we also waited until the end of office hours and nothing arrived.

We have, in fact, not set eyes on this letter in which SALAM has been given notice for having infringed the law.

Now, on the one hand, we remain ignorant of the instances of these infringements that have been referred to. On the other hand, we are worried lest we commit the same violations again and thus cause the cup of the supervisory board's patience to overflow and God forbid, lead the board to take dangerous decisions!

We have, in the past, written about some of the decisions made by the Press Supervisory Board concerning a number of publications, including the closing down of the 'Jahan-e Eslam' and 'Payam-e Daneshju' newspapers — the earlier instance of the latter's closure — and several other cases, and pointed out that these decisions were illegal. We stressed that if a publication is charged with a penalty, since the validity of the evidence can only be decided on by a competent court of law, then, no one has the right to judge and take a decision over the case on the basis of accusations which have not been proven by a competent authority (court) [brackets as published], and, for example, proceed to close down that publication, or, as the gentlemen have said, stop its publication on a temporary basis. Yet it seems that the supervisory board is among those ivory-tower-dwellers who think that they are above responding to any criticisms and would rather just enjoy their power.

At any rate, we are waiting for the written notice to reach us as soon as possible so that we may know where we stand. Then, if we have anything to say, we could present it to our readers and to the supervisory board.

Iran: Nabavi, Armin, Salamati on Elections

96LA0195A Tehran SALAM in Persian
4, 10, 12 Mar 96

[Interviews with Mohammad Salamati, secretary general, and Behzad Nabavi and Mohsen Armin, members of the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, by SALAM; places and dates not given]

[4 Mar 96, p 9]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Boxed item] **Note — In the past weeks, the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran organized several question and answer sessions in order for the people to become familiar as much as possible with its positions. The following are the views of Messrs Mohammad Salamati, the secretary general, and Behzad Nabavi and Mohsen Armin, distinguished members of this organization, regarding the issue of elections as well as their responses to the questions of the participants in these sessions.** [end boxed item]

In these sessions, Mohammad Salamati, the secretary general of the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, said regarding the viewpoints of this organization concerning the Fifth Majles election: Despite the doubts about the climate that governs the elections, we will participate in them and present a list of candidates. He said: The possibility for us to gain a majority in the Majles is small, because the majority of the Imam's line faction (the left) does not participate in the elections, and the opposing factions have a great deal of resources, and this can end in the interest of other factors. If individuals from the Imam's line spectrum and faction (left) can enter the Majles, they must work there in an organized fashion. He added: We want the preservation of freedom and the achievement of social justice, which are now threatened by a particular faction. Regarding the policy of economic modification, he said: We do not agree with the modification policy and have announced that if we enter the Majles, we will not move in the direction of the modification policy. We will pursue a mixed economy, which is referred to in the Constitution. Regarding the issue of approbational supervision, he said: The possibility of a faction taking advantage of this issue exists, and this law must be charged in the interest of the people.

Behzad Nabavi, a distinguished member of the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution, was another participant in these sessions who expressed his views regarding the issue of elections. In the first session, which was held prior to the examination of the qualifications of the candidates, he said: It is most probable that the issue of the examination of the qualifica-

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tions will not be approached soundly, because a particular spectrum has imposed a great deal of influence in this connection. Regarding the positions of the Imam's line groups, known as the left faction, regarding the elections, he said: We do not have any difference of opinion with the other Imam's line groups (left) regarding the issue of the examination of the qualifications. But the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution has decided to enter the elections despite such an analysis, although in the opinion of some, it was faced with rejection of the qualifications and the poisonous propaganda of the opposing factions. Let some of them come prior to the elections and discuss accusations such as corruption and embezzlement against us.

He added: If those who want to prevent our entry into the Majles want to have a diplomatic approach, they must at least use the weapon of rejecting the qualifications where the possibility exists for our candidates to get votes. He also said: Of course, we have entered the elections conditionally. If they reject our qualifications irrationally and do not tell the people the reasons for rejecting the qualifications, we shall take the appropriate steps, engage in exposing, and announce that we will not participate in the elections. He added: If they reject the qualifications of our candidates, they had better provide the people with the reasons for rejecting their qualifications and not worry about our reputation.

[SALAM] Are your recent positions not considered a sort of turn toward the liberals?

[Nabavi] Our positions have been specifically and clearly published in the statements of the organization, and I do not see any similarities. If you read our articles in this connection, you will see that we have explained the positions of the various spectra and our own.

[SALAM] Can the left faction have a coalition with other factions?

[Nabavi] We have said that this is not possible. In our Election Statement No. 3, we announced that the distance between other factions and ourselves is not small, and we will not take part in such a coalition. We will explain this in our future statements or the articles in 'ASR-E MA as to why we will not have a coalition with the modern right faction (the faction of the Kargozaran-e Sazandegi). Despite our weak financial and publicity resources and the particular present conditions, we have entered the elections by ourselves and have stood up. We will not have a coalition with any other group than the imam's line group (the left faction). On the other hand, we believe that the other spectra must make an effort to prevent the exclusive rule of one spectrum, because the faction that politically believes in autocracy and economically believes in capitalism, if it gains exclusive rule, will no longer allow others to breathe. Hence, the fact that we welcome another spectrum to offer a list does not mean that we accept their viewpoints. We want to prevent exclusivism in the Majles and subsequently in the next government because some have planned to take over all three branches by gaining an absolute majority in the Majles and victory in the presidential elections and put an end to us. In this connection, we have recommended to both new factions (modern right and new left) that they participate in the elections. This does not concern the election time because we raised this issue as a warning a year and a half ago. The new left must not be deceived by the claims of the traditional right, which tries to make them believe that they are, like themselves, fundamentalists. The experience of the honeymoon of the modern right and the traditional right in the Fourth Majles election is a warning to the new left and everyone, because at that time they said that the enemy of Hashemi is the enemy of the Prophet and the enemy of God. Today, they act contrary to the motto, and as soon as a movement different from themselves was about to form, they threatened its members with interpellation and prosecution. In our opinion, next is the turn of the new left and the same approach will be repeated, only in a more severe manner. Of course, we look at the fate of obedience to the leader by this faction to be the same as the fate of their motto to support Hashemi.

[SALAM] When you say that social justice is threatened, who are the people who are making this threat?

[Nabavi] In our opinion, what is implemented now is the policy of economic modification, which the traditional and modern right factions still believe in. In the Second Developmental Plan of the country, it is clear that the modification policy is accepted, as it was implemented at that time, contrary to the text of the plan. In our opinion, there is no room for economic justice in the market economy and there is no room for social justice. The dismissal of workers and decrease in subsidies are examples of the effects of this policy, effects that do not exist in a mixed economy.

In our opinion, the modification policy in practice inflicts deadly blows on the society and creates political problems. Social justice does not exist in such a policy now, whether or not the traditional and modern right factions want it. On the other hand, we cannot wait for the results of the modification policy. We are concerned about the fate of the revolution and the regime.

[SALAM] Has the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution taken into consideration the tangible pressures on it in the course of the elections?

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[Nabavi] We have entered the elections with hesitation and conditionally. We do not say that the same situation as the Fourth Majles will occur. In our opinion, the domestic and foreign conditions make it necessary for those conditions not to be repeated and these policies not to be implemented, even though it is not unlikely that our candidates will be treated in the same manner. In any case, we advance step by step. If we see an unreasonable obstacle that cannot be eliminated, we will announce that we have changed our mind.

[SALAM] Considering the resources of the right faction, your participation in the elections may be interpreted as legitimization of the victory of the traditional right. Why do you do this?

[Nabavi] We are a political organization and cannot and do not want to be indifferent to the important issues of the society. We are obliged to enter the elections. By being present in the elections and explaining the positions of the traditional right, we will be able to expose them better and make the people aware. In our opinion, the traditional right has lost its previous position and become weaker.

[SALAM] What is your opinion in connection with what some people say, that if we establish relations with the United States, our problems will be solved?

[Nabavi] Our revolution is not accepted by the United States. The disintegration of the Soviet Union is a good experience in this regard. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, they placed their country at the disposal of the United States. What did they do, and what did they gain? If we establish relations with the United States, we will compromise the dignity of the revolution. On the other hand, they only come to change our behavior and beliefs and nothing else.

[SALAM] The Imam's line groups have boycotted the elections. Should you not have done the same?

[Nabavi] None of the imam's line groups have boycotted the elections. There is a difference between boycotting and not giving a list. Some have said that they do not give election lists, not that they do not encourage people to participate in the elections. We consider the regime to be our own and oppose boycotting the elections. On the other hand, we also oppose unconditional participation.

[10 Mar 96, p 9]

[SALAM] How will you react to the results of the elections? Your participation is a sort of legitimization of the right faction.

[Nabavi] If the right faction gains a majority in the Majles, we will not declare that the Majles is illegitimate. We do not have such a thing in mind. After the Fourth Majles elections, too, the whole Imam's line faction did not take such a position and despite the fact that the qualifications of 80 of our candidates were rejected, we accepted the results of the elections. We consider the regime to be our own, and if we have a criticism, we will act from within the regime and legally.

[SALAM] Why do you weaken the coordination in the imam's line faction?

[Nabavi] We have coordinating meetings with other Imam's line groups once a week. No one has forced our organization not to offer candidates. The analyses of all of us of the existing climate is the same, but some consider offering candidates expedient and some do not. We are not on the opposite direction of the other Imam's line groups, and they do not think so, either.

[SALAM] Who are those included in the new left that you mention in your analyses?

[Nabavi] There is no need for names of persons to be mentioned. The fact that we made reference in one instance and consider a newspaper the organ of the traditional right is because they wanted it themselves.

[SALAM] Why do you not place any importance on the analyses of groups other than these four factions (modern and traditional right and Islamic and new left), such as the Freedom Movement, and not include them in your evaluations?

[Nabavi] This depends on the effectiveness of the spectra in the fate of the revolution and the regime. At one time, all of our efforts were in analyzing the Hypocrites, because we considered them to have an effect on the fate of the country and the deviation that they were after. Today, they no longer have an effect, and the same is true of the Freedom Movement. This is not an insult against anyone, but it must be admitted that they no longer have an effect on the fate of the revolution.

[SALAM] Somewhere you have said that the Fourth Majles elections had no problems. Does this not contradict your other statements?

[Nabavi] My own qualifications were rejected in the Fourth Majles elections. Well, were these elections not problematic or am I not qualified? But on the other hand, I bear witness that no fraud was done on the day of the elections, and no ballot box was replaced illegally, not that the preparations against our faction were not made and the qualifications of 80 of our candidates were rejected. The Voice and Vision was engaged in a propaganda bombardment, and the domestic, and

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foreign conditions escalated this situation. These two issues must be considered separately.

[SALAM] Why are you hostile to the traditional right faction?

[Nabavi] We are not hostile toward anyone. I am even very close with one of the friends in that faction, and we always participate in debates together to the extent that they call us the "debating duo." Nevertheless, I do not accept his views and those of others like him. It is a mistake that in our country, attacking the views of individuals is considered hostility. We must preserve the boundaries of the exchange of opinions and beliefs. Not accepting the views of individuals must not be interpreted as negating them personally and not respecting them.

[SALAM] What is your opinion regarding the separation of religion from politics?

[Nabavi] We have come to this belief, and our positions are specified in 'ASR-E MA. Religion, from our perspective, is an ideological issue.

[SALAM] What is your criterion in defining freedom?

[Nabavi] We define freedom within the framework of the Constitution. We do not accept the lack of restraint resulting from liberalism freedom.

[SALAM] Do you consider the government of Engineer Mir Hoseyn Musavi successful?

[Nabavi] Even though I was in his government, I have some criticisms, but in comparing and considering the conditions, it was more successful than the present government. Of course, such a comparison is not very useful.

[SALAM] Do you predict sufficient implemental guarantees for the candidates who participate in the elections?

[Nabavi] I do not see such a guarantee, even for ourselves, let alone other candidates.

[SALAM] Is there any hope for your candidates to be in the Majles?

[Nabavi] I find it unlikely because they must go through seven feats, but we will make our effort.

[SALAM] Do you consider the statement of the Kargozaran to be illegal?

[Nabavi] We welcome the movement and do not consider it illegal. There are statements and threats, such as interpellation, to frighten them, but we do not accept their views either because they completely approve of the government policies, whereas we have criticisms of the economic and foreign policies.

[SALAM] Some believe that you yourself established the roots of the present discord with other political groups in the early years of the revolution and omitted others, such as Eng. Bazargan. What is your opinion in this regard?

[Nabavi] We never intended to omit those like Eng. Bazargan. They and others themselves chose the same fate with others who were trying to overthrow the regime. It is only to appear as victims that some raise such issues. Everyone who accepts the Constitution and the regime should come and be active. Of course, some dogmatic and improper reactions at the present have caused some to pose as having been wronged. Dogmatic policy, in the same way that it has not responded to the issue of improper veiling, is not correct in regards to politics either and will not have positive results.

[SALAM] What is your opinion regarding foreign borrowing?

[Salamati] The use of foreign financial resources is desirable, but the borrowing that has been done has been for current expenditures. In the First Plan, the issue of foreign investments did not exist; in the Second Plan they have included it, which is contrary to the Constitution.

[SALAM] What is your opinion regarding Ansar-e Hezbollah?

[Salamati] The Ansar-e Hezbollah can be evaluated from two perspectives. We consider all the members of the Ansar-e Hezbollah to be Hezbollahi people who have fought on the front and are concerned, but the organization of the Ansar-e Hezbollah is not under the control of its membership, and it is felt that it is directed from elsewhere, which should not be. The brothers in Ansar-e Hezbollah must be careful that their sincere intentions are not taken advantage of.

[SALAM] If the left faction gains a majority in the Majles, is there a possibility for disunity between the government and the faction?

[Salamati] The existence of two different channels for the election of these two branches is good. In our opinion, the Majles must not be under the control of the president. It is much better for the government and the Majles to be independent of each other. If the left minority comes to the Majles, it will not quarrel with the president, rather, it will announce its opinions. This is a blessing for the Majles not to be under the control of the government.

[SALAM] What is your opinion regarding deviating from the economic modification policy?

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[Salamati] Not only will deviation from the economic modification policy not have any ill effects, but it will be in our interest.

[SALAM] Your defeat in the next election is certain. Why do you not go after serious political work?

[Salamati] Despite the fact that we have few resources, we have not given up political activity. We are not connected to the bazaar, like the traditional right faction, so that the speculators can help us. The financial situation of the Imam's line faction is as you see. It has no financial resources and was weakened after the Fourth Majles elections, but this is no reason to abandon political activity.

[SALAM] Why do you not use the pressure leverages on the government, like the Freedom Movement?

[Salamati] We do not believe by any means in contacting foreign circles and using international pressure leverages, like the Freedom Movement. We even rejected interviews with the BBC, because the BBC is not a medium in the interest of our people. Our problems are domestic and have nothing to do with them.

[SALAM] One of the criticisms against you is that you only criticize and have no practical program and proposal.

[Salamati] We do not merely engage in criticism and offer programs as well. So far, no other group has done this. We say that these policies are not correct for this reason, and for these reasons they must be replaced with the policies that are offered.

One of the proud aspects of our organization is that it has acted well in terms of the fundamental views.

[SALAM] What is the reason for the Khaneh-ye Kargar [House of Workers] supporting the positions of the modern right (Kargozaran)?

[Salamati] The House of Workers was considered an ally of the left faction, but now they believe that left and right factional divisions, as before, are meaningless. We are negotiating with them to see if we can reach an agreement.

[SALAM] Will your organization make a coalition with other left faction groups?

[Salamati] We have spoke to some groups and have reached agreements. Some have not announced their final opinions to us yet and are waiting to see whether or not the conditions become favorable. Some of the groups, such as the Majma'-e Ruhaniyyun-e Mobarez [Militant Clerics Society], do not offer a candidate list at all.

[SALAM] Why is the name of the wife of Martyr Raja'i not on your list of candidates?

[Salamati] We have spoken with her several times, but Mrs. Raja'i had no interest in registering. We insisted that she should accept, but she declined.

[12 Mar 96, p 9]

[SALAM] It appears that the rejection of qualifications is a sort of autocracy that takes away the opportunity for exchange of views in the society.

[Armin] That is not how we regard it. Rejection of qualifications is neither bad in itself nor a means of absolute autocracy. In every country, the issue of rejecting qualifications and certain regulations exists. The argument is not over the existence of the authority to reject qualifications. Our argument is over the process of determining the qualifications on the basis of clear and precise regulations and laws. At the present, not only is the determination of the qualifications factional, but also the regulations are vague and general. While the affiliated forces with the same ideology as the left have been omitted, the traditional right candidates have easily passed through this filter. Even in some cities, the qualifications of all the candidates of the left faction have been rejected. Our objection to this process is based on the narrow-mined tendencies. Political and party campaigns must be institutionalized to solve this problem.

[SALAM] What are the reasons for the stagnation of political activities in the universities?

[Armin] The universities are not separate from the general climate of the society. When institutionalized political activity does not exist in the society, the universities move in that direction. The activities of parties and party movements must be encouraged so that their effect appears in the universities.

[-SALAM] What is your opinion regarding the past operations of the Mojahedin Organization of the Islamic Revolution?

[Armin] The brothers who are now in the organization and have been among the former active members of the organization accepted the positions of the organization until 1360 [21 March 1981-20 March 1982], but from 1360, with the start of differences within the organization, they had criticisms regarding its operations and left it. Hence, we accept the responsibility for all the positions of the organization up to 1360.

[SALAM] Could you chose your method of struggle?

[Armin] What does changing the method of struggle mean? We accept that every political force must offer

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the necessary tactics and statements appropriate to every situation.

But it is not an issue for us at all to abandon political activity and move toward affairs that benefit the general public or to become extremists and engage in violent struggle. We believe that we have a share in the regime, and our criticisms are based on goodwill.

[SALAM] You oppose approbational supervision. Will you maintain this belief if the minister of interior is not for the right faction?

[Armin] The present problems are not the implemental committees. In fact, the implemental committees are the people's side of the issue and are trusted by the people. It is the Council of Guardians that says its supervision has been approbational from the beginning. In the third term, the Ministry of Interior, with the support of the imam, prevented this interpretation. In the fourth term, the Council of Guardians acted approbationally to some extent. In the fifth term, though, the Ministry of Interior and the Council of Guardians have become similar.

[SALAM] What is your opinion regarding relations between Iran and the United States?

[Salamati] We do not believe in relations with the United States. The United States is out to destroy our regime. Relations with the United States not only are not in our interest, but are detrimental. This relationship will threaten our independence and is suicidal.

[SALAM] Why have your qualifications (Armin) been rejected by the implemental committees?

[Armin] My qualifications were approved in the previous term. Now, in my opinion, the only thing that has changed is the publication of 'ASR-E MA. I have neither gained any new money compared to the previous term nor been summoned to the court for an offense.

[SALAM] What is your economic model and that of the traditional right?

[Armin] We have offered and offer our economic model in 'ASR-E MA. The economic model of the traditional right is not very coherent. If they had a coherent economic model, they would not move so much in a zigzag fashion. They have reached this point after a lot of mistakes. They have no economic model and plan.

[SALAM] In your opinion, what is the situation of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani between the modern and traditional right spectra?

[Armin] The Kargozaran feel a sense of incompatibility with the Majles majority. The structural differences separate them from each other. The traditional right has not believed in the motto of support for Hashemi, and the traditional right's belief in religious guardianship was proven during the time of the imam. Mr. Hashemi is an intelligent politician and has realized that the traditional right is after absolute control of power.

[SALAM] Would it not have been better to call the new left the extremist right in your analysis?

[Armin] Our classifications were not based on economic and political interests. Among all these factions, individuals from various social bases are seen. The new left does not have specific economic views and is not coherent in other dimensions either. Of course, the political groups in our society are changing and the factional divisions are gradually becoming more distinct and clear.

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Prime Minister Reshuffles Cabinet To Accommodate RPP

BK1106110896 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 11 Jun 96

[Report by a "POST correspondent" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, June 10 — Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba yet again reshuffled his unruly three-party cabinet on Monday [10 June] to accommodate the whims of his small but powerful ally Rastriya Prajatantra Party [RPP].

The move announced through a court statement comes barely a month after the last cabinet reshuffle and is not likely to go down well within the prime minister's own Nepali Congress [NC] party.

This is the fourth cabinet expansion (and reshuffle) made by Deuba since he assumed power in September last year at the head of a three-party alliance which has lately been pulling in opposite directions.

The biggest winner in the latest reshuffle is the RPP which had demanded, and now received, promotions of all its junior ministers to the rank of minister of state. One state minister, Ram Krishna Acharya, has been promoted higher up to cabinet rank at the yet to be operational Ministry of Science and Technology.

Aside of the RPP, only Minister of State without portfolio Sharad Singh Bhandari who won parliamentary election as an independent, succeeded in coming out as one of the winners, bagging the full cabinet rank of Minister Without Portfolio.

Monday's cabinet reshuffle promotes 7 members of the Council of Ministers, 6 of them from the RPP. Assistant ministers Shanti Shumsher Rana and Sarbendra Nath

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Shukla have been promoted as state ministers in their previous portfolios in the Housing and Physical Planning and the Water Resources ministries respectively. Whereas, assistant ministers Prem Bahadur Bhandari, Mahendra Raya and Rajiv Parauli have been made the state ministers with their portfolios changed to Agriculture, Land Reform and Management, and Local Development ministries respectively.

Assistant ministers Khobari Raya and Bishnu Bikram Thapa (both from RPP) have their portfolio changed to Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning respectively.

Deuba's latest gambit is being seen here as a brazen and desperate attempt to hold together his unruly coalition. RPP, his major partner in government, has been heavily mired in infighting threatening Deuba's survival.

The RPP's Chand faction which nearly bolted to the opposition UML [United Marxist-Leninist] earlier this year is known to have demanded promotions of its junior ministers, and the prime minister has done just that.

Deuba has chosen to announce the reshuffle at a crucial moment, say political analysts, in the hopes of thwarting another UML move to pull down his government during the soon to convene budgetary session of parliament.

Despite Deuba's desperate bid to hold on to power, he is sure to come under fire from his own party colleagues for giving too much to the RPP.

Many NC stalwarts attacked Deuba when the last such expansion was announced last month. The NC's newly installed vice president Ms Shailaja Acharya even warned this week that the growing RPP clout in government would lend the Nepali Congress a bad name.

Nepal: Antinuclear Protester Arrested En Route to PRC Embassy

BK1206101896 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 12 Jun 96

[Report by a "POST correspondent" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, June 11 — Police today arrested around 15 human rights activists who were protesting a recent nuclear test conducted by China.

The activists of Human Rights and Peace Society were about to march towards the Chinese Embassy to submit a memorandum protesting the test when police herded them into a van at Ratna Park.

They continued to shout anti-nuclear test slogans from inside the police van as it moved away. "China: we are not happy, stop nuclear test," read one of their placards.

China set off a nuclear explosion test at its Lop Nor nuclear base on Saturday, [8 June] provoking worldwide criticism just as the comprehensive nuclear test ban seems about to be finalized in the near future.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto To Respond to Gowda Talks Offer After Budget

BK1206044196 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 11 Jun 96 p 12

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Monday [10 June] her government would look into the letter, received by the Foreign Office from the Indian Prime Minister offering resumption of secretary-level talks with Pakistan, after the budget session.

"I hope Pakistan and India could look into outstanding disputes and this is the time for reappraisal and review", she said answering questions at a news conference.

Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda responded to her felicitation message on assumption of his office in which she had offered talks to resolve all outstanding issues, particularly Kashmir, between the two countries.

Ms Bhutto said the new Indian government should make special reference to the lingering Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

PPI quoting a Foreign Office spokesman said Pakistan is studying the contents of the Indian Prime Minister's letter. He avoided giving any other comment on the issue.

The last round of Pak-India foreign secretary-level talks were held here in January 1994. However, the two sides could not make any headway for the solution of contentious issues including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

The two sides had then also exchanged eight non-papers (two Pakistani and six Indian). But the then foreign secretary Shaharyar M Khan had announced at a press conference that the Indian non-papers failed to address the core issue of Kashmir.

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Pakistan: India 'Apparently' Accepts Offer for Talks

BK1206111896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 12 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Foreign Office in Islamabad has received messages of the Indian prime minister, Mr. Deve Gowda, and foreign minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, apparently accepting the proposal for talks given by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali. This was stated by a spokesman of the Foreign Office in Islamabad today. The spokesman said the prime minister, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, had made the offer of talks aimed at settlement of the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding matters between the two countries. The prime minister has made it clear that a response to the Indian leaders' messages would be sent after the budget session of the National Assembly.

Pakistan: MQM Leader Interviewed on Reconciliation

96AS0026B Lahore ZINDGI in Urdu 26 Apr 96 pp 31-32

[Ghulam Ahmed Ismael Interviewed by Nasir Ahmed Salimi; date and place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text]

[Salimi] Are you satisfied with government actions to establish law and order in Karachi?

[Ghulam Ahmed Ismael] Unfortunately the government has failed in realizing the importance of this problem and finding an effective solution to it. This is not just Karachi's problem. Until it is resolved, problems involving national economy and the danger to our national unity and safety cannot be resolved. This requires concerted efforts at the national level. This problem can be solved neither by accusing the elected leadership of terrorism nor by expressing verbal sympathy to Karachi residents and acting deceptively just for show. Until we see this problem within its real framework and try to resolve it honestly and fairly, there will be no progress in its resolution and it will endanger our nation. In my opinion, there are several factors related to this problem and we have to see all these factors in an appropriate light. We have to rise above our political interests, our individual and group prejudices and focus on resolving this issue to take some action seriously. It also calls for an immediate political resolution because of its importance and also requires administrative and economic measures of a permanent nature. Unfortunately, this issue is being neglected both politically and economically. The political situation needs to be resolved politically and there is no other way in our civilized world than holding bilateral talks. Talks can be successful only if both parties are willing to concede on several points. No other approach has been successful in the past and no other way can guarantee our getting out of this crisis. It is the responsibility of both parties to the negotiations successful. It is the basic responsibility as well as legal and moral duty of the government to provide protection to citizens. It has the resources. If the government tries to resolve the Karachi problem with bravery and honesty, the "terrorists" will disappear by themselves.

[Salimi] Where should the government begin with immediate and necessary steps that could alleviate the situation?

[Ghulam Ahmed Ismael] The government first has to take steps to reinstate citizens' confidence. Karachi's citizens, regardless of their language or their political or religious affiliations, strongly believe that this government is not interested in Karachi's problems. The situation will not improve until this serious problem of distrust in government is taken care of. At present every rational citizen believes that the government is punishing the whole population of Karachi for its own differences with the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM] and is depriving them of their political, economic, and human rights at all levels. A viable solution can be reached only after the government sincerely accepts the mandate given by the people. By declaring the elected leadership "terrorists" we have faced a very tragic crisis in the past. Voluntary and fair steps that are seen voluntary and fair by the rest of the world are needed to get the trust of the people back. Since the government has failed to hold a new census, it is necessary for the government to hold municipal elections according to the 1987 election district arrangement. At the same time, the practice of establishing new election districts for political reasons must be stopped. The plan to end Karachi Municipal Corporation's centralization should be shelved. However, there is no harm in establishing administrative units in the form of zonal social committees. At the same time, assurance must be given to have the councilors elected to zonal municipal committees approved for membership of the Municipal Corporation. They should have all the rights including participation in election of the mayor just like they had in 1979 and 1983. The Municipal Corporation of Karachi must be formed with all the elected councilors. The government must accept sincerely whoever the people elect as their candidates and give all the municipal agencies and available resources to this elected leadership. Because the Municipal Corporation of Karachi does not have elected officials, the administrators appointed by the government and their favored assistants are abusing the city's resources. Karachi's re-

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sources, instead of being used for providing amenities for its citizens, are being used for bureaucracy and for plans being implemented in Sindh by the government. This must be stopped immediately as this kind of looting is hindering resolution of Karachi's problems. This also intensifies the feeling of deprivation felt by Karachi citizens.

While bureaucrats and their henchmen are transferring resources belonging to Karachi's citizens to inner Sindh, they are also using the excuse of not having enough resources to meet administrative expenses in order to sell Karachi's real estate at negligible prices. This does not mean that the urban population does not want the rural population of inner Sindh to have urban amenities. They do want the rural people to have all these utilities and to obtain these, big landlords should be required to give a portion of these income for providing education, health services, and clean drinking water in the areas from where they earn income from agriculture. They should also establish agri-based industries in their localities to help poor farmers obtain employment. If they do not agree, their income should be taxed heavily so the government can provide these amenities itself. It is an atrocious act when the representatives who are elected by the votes of the rural population do not allow landlords to pay any tax and then go ahead and snatch away the resources collected by the urban citizens through the sweat of their brow. In the light of the special situation of Karachi, it is necessary that the governments of the four provinces should reserve a part of their developmental budget for projects in Karachi. These provinces owe Karachi because Karachi collects and pays the major part of our nation's excise taxes. These taxes are provided to the four provinces for basic amenities and developmental projects. In addition, the labor force coming from these provinces works in Karachi and sends money back to its home provinces.

It is a fact that Karachi played an important role in our nation's industrial development. Many important industrial and trade organizations in other provinces were founded by people who had started their educational and employment in Karachi without much resources and support. With the blessings of Allah, they had the great opportunity to prove their skills and talents in the free and fair environment of Karachi. Many of Karachi's settlements are living proof of the fact that people who came empty handed to Karachi have access to all worldly goods now because the equal opportunity available in Karachi. They used their resources to establish businesses and industries in their localities. It is because of these people who had returned from Karachi that the people in those areas have the courage to stand up to the landlords of their area. The truth is that, except for Karachi, average people did not have the appropriate atmosphere for starting a business. It is unfortunate that our leaders with landlord mentality and their henchmen have punished Karachi for it and now this city is falling into ruins.

All the progress that Karachi made after Pakistan's establishment, were due to Allah's blessings and the muscles of the hard working people who made Karachi their home and not because of our government. The aim of our rulers has always been to loot Karachi's resources and destroy it for their short-term political interests and prejudices. Unfortunately, this practice is still going on and this is the major hurdle in finding a political solution to Karachi's problem. Until the rulers stop this practice, we cannot expect lasting peace in Karachi. Government force can win areas; it cannot use force to win people. To do that, it must sincerely try to solve the problems citizens are facing and honestly provide them their political and economic rights.

[Salimi] However, is not it a fact that the MQM which had a mandate from Karachi's people had control of the municipal corporation? It formed an alliance with the Pakistan People's Party [PPP] in 1988 and with Jam-i Sadiq in 1990 in the state and with Nawaz Sharif at the Center. Did it help Karachi's people to get rid of their feeling of being exploited and help them get legitimate political and economic rights?

[Ghulam Ahmed Ismael] Look, this is not the time to go into these details. Everyone know about me. I am one of those people who do not agree with the MQM politics and methods of operation. When the MQM emerged like a typhoon and uprooted major institutions in 1987, I was able to defeat a major pillar of that party by the grace of Allah. I was in the opposition during the entire MQM era and openly opposed its every action. I raised my voice according to my conscience in the assembly. This does not mean that we should close our eyes to what happened to the city and its people just because the goal is get the MQM. I believe that the MQM is benefitting from all the actions of our government and the people are suffering. In my opinion, if Muzaffar Ali Shah's government had done its duty by allowing free and fair municipal elections and not dismissed the municipal leadership by using is state powers, the MQM leadership would have faced difficulties in the municipal elections. It is not possible to deny the fact that the MQM leadership controlled the municipal resources and had the authority over it from 1987 to 1992. It shared power with the PPP in 1988, and with Jam-i Sadiq Ali and Syed Muzaffar Ali Shah at the state level and with Nawaz Sharif at the Center from 1990 to 1992. It enjoyed the blessing of important organizations because of relationship with General Aslam Beg and General

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Asif Nawaz. In my opinion, if we had held municipal elections instead of the military operation, the people would have taken care of the MQM on their own. The action that the near-sighted government leaders took and punished the whole population of Karachi in the name of MQM cannot be ever condoned.

[Salimi] In your opinion, did the MQM spend Karachi's resources for solving people's problems for the problems of their workers?

[Ghulam Ahmed Ismael] I have no hesitance in saying that the MQM leadership established neither any good practice not did it play any responsible role while dealing with the problems of the people or its own members. What hurt them most was that instead of giving a free hand to Dr. Farooq Istar they lavished luxuries on their members. They should have established a fair and unbiased merit system. This would have been according to the wishes of the people living here. However, the government made all their right and wrongful deeds meaningless because of its own wrong policies and looting by bureaucrats. It is meaningless for people to learn what the MQM did. The are suffering because of government's erroneous policies. Had the government recognized a line between the people and the MQM leadership, the people would have thought about the mistakes that the MQM made in the past. However, the government put everyone who spoke Urdu [as a native language] in the same category. The people has the right to question the MQM or any power that represents them. It is not proper in a court of law to give the right to the police or the administration to make decisions without a crime being proved and it is not in the interest of our nation. We have harmed our nation irreparably by such actions in the past also. There is no room for it now. I would suggest forming a high-level court-appointed permanent commission to investigate government at national, state, and municipal levels to check looting of national resources and to control corruption effectively. We must take immediate action to cleanse the affairs instead of blaming the past for wrong actions and looting of resources. If it was wrong to use municipal resources to shower favors on party loyals and provide them employment, then what is the reason for helping party members now through the appointed officials? The last point is that as long as the MQM has the mandate from the people of this city, we have to recognize this mandate and follow up on it. The decision of law minister N.S. Khan that, "the government will not rest until it has accepted the previous mandate of Karachi's citizens" will push us in the quicksand again. The lesson from history tells us that the people have neither changed their mandate due to government pressure nor have they accepted any mandate forced by it.

Pakistan: Pakistani President Leghari Interviewed, Condemns Terrorism

96LH0234A Jeddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 14 May 96 p 10

["Text" of interview with Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari by Fahim al-Hamid in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah; date not given; translated into Arabic by Mirghani Mu'tasim]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Begin introduction] Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari did not appear on the Pakistan foreign political scene as an effective and influential figure until 1993. The story of his rise to prominence is fascinating and exciting. The government of Nawaz Sharif had completed all the preparations for the opening of the Islamic conference. However, 48 hours before the opening of the conference, former Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dissolved the government. Leghari then served as economy minister in the provisional government of Balakh Shiramzari [as transliterated]. I was covering the conference activities. Everyone was waiting to learn the name of the person who will chair this major Islamic conference, particularly as no foreign minister had been appointed. So, 24 hours before the opening, the government announced that Leghari, who was appointed acting foreign minister, would chair the conference. Leghari conducted the work of the conference skillfully. My first meeting with him was during this conference. Following the elections that took place at the end of 1993, Leghari was appointed a foreign minister in Benazir Bhutto's government, but he only served a few weeks in this position. Circumstances made it possible for me to meet with him during that brief period. A few weeks later, the ruling Pakistan People's Party nominated him as president of Pakistan and he won the post.

President Leghari is considered one of the three main pillars of Pakistani policy. He is one of the so-called ruling troika, which also includes the Pakistani chief of staff and the prime minister. He began his political career in 1973 as a member of the Pakistani People's Party. He was elected as member of the senate in 1975 and took part in the elections of 1977, 1989, and 1993.

After performing the hajj rites this year, his Excellency President Leghari arrived in the al-Madinah al-Munawwarah to visit the Mosque of the Prophet, God's prayers and peace be upon him. I asked to meet with him to get his views on the Kingdom's services to the pilgrims this year, appreciating the fact that he could be tired following the performance of the hajj rites.

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I began by congratulating his excellency on his hajj. I was surprised by his cheerful spirit. He told me that he was the first Pakistani president to perform the hajj rites while in office. During the meeting, which lasted about 90 minutes, his excellency talked about important and sensitive issues facing the Islamic world, the internal situation in Pakistan, and the Kashmir issue. Pakistani Presidential Adviser Fawajah Ijaz Surur [as transliterated] and Pakistani Ambassador in Saudi Arabia Shahid Amin attended the meeting. [End introduction]

The text of the interview follows.

[Al-Hamid] First, we would like to welcome you and to thank you for giving 'UKAZ this opportunity to interview you. Reports say that Pakistan will host an extraordinary Islamic conference next year on the occasion of its 50th independence anniversary. Are you expecting a good response to this invitation? Will this conference be ceremonial or will it discuss current Islamic issues?

[Leghari] On the 50th anniversary of Pakistan's independence, an extraordinary Islamic conference will be held at the level of Islamic state leaders in Islamabad. We thank all the states that have positively responded to the invitation and agreed in principle to attend this conference. I have sent a message to the secretary general of the Islamic Conference Organization to invite the heads of Islamic states and governments to this conference. We hope to hold the conference on 23 March 1997, God willing. This date marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan. Muslims all over the world look to Pakistan as a source of strength to the Islamic nation, as we are now particularly stronger and more stable. This qualifies us to seriously participate in establishing world peace. Pakistan has experienced many crises since its establishment because of collective efforts that crystallized the value of the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. However, It has overcome all the crises that faced its march and established a strong nation in Pakistan that can embrace all the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Despite the economic and political crisis, we are moving toward stronger unity and economy, God willing.

[Al-Hamid] In light of the existence of political forces with different leanings, how do you view political stability in Pakistan? Do these parties agree on the sensitive issues facing Pakistan?

[Leghari] Of course, I firmly believe that the best thing would be to achieve complete agreement on all the main issues of interest to us. We in Pakistan are facing many crises, such as the Kashmir issue, which remains a source of concern to us. Total agreement exists among our people on the Kashmir issue, and even beyond the general consensus; it is among all the political parties. Still, the two main political parties in the country — the government and the opposition — have security and foreign policy concerns. They agree on the evolution of security measures and policy formulation. There is also the question of our nuclear programs. Then comes agreement on the social and economic problems. It is a good thing to have agreement in views between the two influential blocs in the country. Most countries in the world suffer from differences and disagreement on the management of their economic and social programs. The situation is somewhat different in Pakistan. We have a measure of agreement on urgent social issues to improve our people's educational and health care standards. The literacy rate has not matched our ambition. Also, regarding health care, our programs do not cover all the people. We have a consensus on these two issues and also on economic policy. Agreement between the government and the opposition is clear in the support for the government's efforts to tackle the economic situation, the budget deficit, and inflation. Despite the criticism leveled by the opposition against the ruling party regarding the government's ability to implement these policies, the differences in views are completely insignificant compared with the agreement on the main policies and the confidence in them.

We must not overlook the question of privatization, which is designed to liberalize trade and create a free and diversified economy, which the private sector can manage. The extent of approval we enjoy is clear. I think that Pakistan's strength lies in this consensus. Our people have experienced democracy, which is usually characterized by extensive political argument and activity. The tumult of democratic practice is often mixed with the political authority's noise to hide the manifestations of consensus, which is Pakistan's strength. Pakistan was able, throughout the years, to obtain and develop important technologies. We have often said that we can achieve what we want, even if it demanded high technological standards. We need to lay more emphasis on education, which has not received sufficient attention in the past 47-48 years. We have not invested sufficiently in education, in percentage terms, based on our gross national product. This has led to the spread of illiteracy, which has reached 35 percent among males and about half a percent [as published] among females. Here lies a clear weakness, which I can say is hampering our march toward economic and social renaissance. What we need now is a comprehensive revolution in the fields of education, combating illiteracy, and developing the vocational and technological education. Without such an effort, we cannot achieve a bright and happy future. We know our weak points. With God's help, we will try to

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solve these problems. As we said, Pakistan's strength is the strength of the Islamic nation. We have a population of more than 130 million people. The Almighty God has blessed our country with rich natural resources. We have agricultural land considered the most fertile in the world. About 25 million hectares of land are under irrigation and another 20-25 million hectares can be utilized. We possess abundant water resources and capabilities to store this water to be used in power generation and irrigating additional areas of land. The Pakistani people are known for their love to work on the land and in factories. I think they are good citizens, wherever they are. They are distinguished by their obedience to the law and hard work. God willing, Pakistan will progress from strength to strength.

Here I must not forget to pay tribute to the large support we received from the Islamic countries, led by the Saudi Arabian Kingdom, on matters that directly concern us, like the Kashmir issue. Saudi Arabia has always supported us. It has always been ready to help us when we ask. Saudi Arabia helped Pakistan very much.

When we faced a difficult situation in Afghanistan, following the Soviet invasion, Saudi Arabia was in the forefront of the countries that helped us. This is besides the aid it gave to the Afghan refugees. We also must not overlook its role in supporting the Islamic nation's issues. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Palestine are good examples. Of course, we in Pakistan know very well that Saudi Arabia will not hesitate to provide support and aid in the future, God willing. We are also extremely gratified by the efforts made by Saudi Arabia to establish peace in Afghanistan. Peace in this country will bring stability to Central Asia where Pakistan is located. This area is considered the meeting point of different cultures and civilizations and is of geopolitical importance.

We are part of the Indian subcontinent. India is our neighbor and China lies on our northeastern border. China represents a great civilization. Friendly relations have existed between China and Pakistan for many years. China is consistently growing economically. We think it will play an important role in establishing peace in this area. We also have the Central Asian Republics — those that recently split from the former Soviet Union. They are currently building their constitutional institutions and developing their economies. They will support our efforts to create a stable region and secure borders. The overland roads between these states and Afghanistan and Pakistan are short, and this could help promote trade and development in our area. Russian oil flows through Jarghou [as transliterated] in Turkmenistan. The pipelines can carry oil to Gwago [as transliterated] port and other ports. The pipelines can also carry natural gas. Therefore, the huge reserves of oil, natural gas, and mineral resources can be utilized to achieve prosperity for all the peoples of the area. However, to benefit from the overland routes, security and peace must first be established in Afghanistan.

Writers in the West have a misconception about Islam, which they have unjustifiably been promoting for a long time. This has resulted in an unfair attitude to Islam in the world. Many offenses have been committed against Islam. The misconception about Islam is based on allegations regarding the existence of a conflict of cultures or a conflict between the Islamic and the Western cultures. We must try to correct this idea. Islam is a religion of peace; its message is peace. This refutes the claim about a conflict between cultures. We are relentlessly trying to spread the noble message of Islam, which is peace and tolerance. We feel that Pakistan can play a vital role with fraternal countries, such as Saudi Arabia, in introducing a fundamental change in the views of the West and the other states and cultures about Islam. Our central geopolitical position could help very much in this regard.

[Al-Hamid] Pakistan is one of the countries that has suffered from terrorism. Explosions have recently taken place in Pakistan. How do you view the issue of terrorism? How can coordination be established to combat this phenomenon and prevent it from spreading?

[Leghari] Well, Pakistan firmly believes in the need to eliminate terrorism and to deal with it with complete firmness. It is important that we go to the root of the problem. It is not enough to arrest and neutralize the terrorists. We must try to remove the causes and roots of terrorism. As you said, Pakistan is really suffering from terrorism. It has been the victim of terrorism. A big wave of terrorism has targeted Pakistan, not only now but for more than 15 years since the Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan. Pakistan was on the confrontation line against this invasion. Rocket attacks, bomb explosions, car bombs, and attacks with Scud missiles were carried out against our country and against Pakistani targets. This situation continued mainly in the northwestern province and the tribal regions near the Afghan border while the Soviets were in Afghanistan. Those involved in these terrorist operations tried to spread them to other provinces in Pakistan. Some provinces have been the scene of some bomb explosions and other terrorist attacks. Because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the opposition activity to it, weapons poured into Pakistan.

This country, unfortunately, inherited what is known as "the Kalashnikov and narcotics culture." No hard drugs

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existed in Pakistan in 1978 and 1979. Now, we have more than 3 million drug addicts. This is the result of the role we played as a confrontation state during the Afghan war. We can say the same thing regarding the weapons. Huge quantities of Kalashnikov rifles and other weapons, like RPG's and other destructive weapons, flooded the country. Perhaps you can see the damage caused to Karachi because of terrorism.

[Al-Hamid] Excuse me, do you consider the violence taking place in Karachi as part of the domestic terrorism in Pakistan or a political issue?

[Leghari] The violence in Karachi is really part of the terrorist activity. I have no doubt about it. Still, this terrorist activity has special characteristics.

They turned to terrorism to dominate the political scene. They established terrorist cells and groups, thinking they could achieve their goals through terrorism.

Terrorism has existed in Karachi for more than a decade. However, thank God, terrorist activity has dropped sharply during the past six months.

The government has eliminated most of the terrorist groups and cells through good intelligence and the cooperation of the Karachi people.

On average, 15-16 people were being killed every day at the height of the terrorist wave in May, June, and July. The dead were members of the police and paramilitary forces. Many innocent people were also killed as a result of terrorist attacks.

The average number of people killed in terrorist attacks dropped to less than one per day, thanks to the measures adopted by the government. Still, I think we must improve and develop these measures. In view of this tangible decline in the number of terrorist victims, I think that a major change has taken place: the people of Karachi now enjoy more security and stability. Karachi, as we know, is considered one of the largest cities in the world. It has a population of 12 million people. The growth in its population has outpaced the development of its services. Consequently, there are several reasons for the gloom that is evident in the city. It is partly due to racial, political, and economic deprivation.

Although Karachi is considered the richest region in Pakistan, there is a feeling of deprivation in some of its neighborhoods. I think that foreign hands are behind the training of terrorist cadres. I have no doubt that India is involved training terrorists.

[Al-Hamid] Do you have proof of India's involvement in the training of terrorists?

[Leghari] Yes. We have information about the camps in which India provides training to these terrorists. Our intelligence services and government know about this from persons who have been detained and questioned. However, we do not want to make this a major international issue. We think that the measures we adopted in Karachi will be more effective than blaming another country every time. As I said before, terrorism is not the only reason for the gloomy situation in Karachi. India has exploited this situation to make it worse. Still, the situation in the city is better today than it was six months, eight months, one year, two years, seven years, or even eight years ago. The situation has improved immensely. The city is witnessing increased foreign investment.

A multinational company has established a plant in Karachi at a cost of $450 million. Power stations costing more than $3 billion have also been built. This is besides many industries, which will be established in the city in the future. The government is generously spending money to improve and develop the city's infrastructure.

The government is implementing a master plan to modernize Karachi and tackle the traffic, sewage, and water supply problems. We have allocated huge budgets to solve these problems. The private sector is tackling the problems of power cuts. It is currently establishing a huge project outside the city of Karachi to end the problem. The private sector tackles most of these problems. The Zaynal Project and the Hob Project will commence partial operation this year.

We are catering to Karachi's urgent infrastructural needs. Still, this city has its own peculiar problems. The racial problem in this city, in which 45 percent of the people are of a different ethnic background, must be solved with understanding and vision. Failure to participate in the decisionmaking process is their fault. Nevertheless, their problems must not be overlooked. They participated in the first government of Benazir Bhutto. They also participated in the government of Nawaz Sharif. The present government tried to enter into negotiations with them to include them in the government, but failed. While we are trying to resolve the problem of terrorism, we must also try to reach a common constructive understanding. The government and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement have been engaged in some negotiations, but these have been suspended for a while. However, I am fully confident that we will soon resume these negotiations to reach an agreement to end the crises caused by the racial problem in the country. I would like to add that terrorism is a problem facing the entire world and is not limited to our area. I have already said that terrorism has found a fertile ground and increased during and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During that period, some of our citizens enlisted in jihad activities. There were

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volunteers from many Muslim countries that supported the Afghan cause. When the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan, the Afghan factions, unfortunately, clashed with each other and did not abide by the cease-fire. Despite the Mecca agreement and the Islamabad agreement, the Afghan factions continued to fight each other. They should have fulfilled the commitments they made in Mecca, but they chose to disregard their promises and agreements and thus have increased the suffering of the Afghan people. We now have more than 1.4 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These conditions created a fertile ground for terrorists. Many Arab and other governments have complained about those who received training in Afghanistan and started causing trouble in their countries. In Pakistan, we now firmly believe in the need to implement the UN resolutions and protect the interests of any affected state. Pakistan's policy is clear in this regard. It prohibits and prevents the launching of any terrorist operation from or within its territory. When we learn about the presence of any terrorist in our country, the security services act quickly to arrest him and hand him over to the governments concerned. However, we still believe in the need to uproot terrorism, which, I think, is caused by the unstable political conditions in Afghanistan. We must tackle this problem and do our best to restore peace quickly in this country, which has been torn apart by war.

As I said, the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan and the existence of a strong government there can end terrorism. Peace and stability in Afghanistan are important factors not only for ending terrorism, but also for ending the drug problem. Here I must not forget to note the vital and important role Saudi Arabia has been playing in this regard through coordination with Pakistan.

My personal Secretary Shamshir Ali Khan's brother, who is the governor of the northwestern province, was injured in a terrorist attack, which left his daughter and some of his grandchildren dead. This took place in a bomb explosion in Peshawar during 'Id al-Adha. Another explosion left more than 40 people dead. This was preceded by an attack on a hospital. Therefore, we must concentrate our efforts to end this problem everywhere in the world. Let us look at the situation in Lebanon and Palestine. The main cause is the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory. When force was used recently, the result was death and the displacement of more than half a million people. This is another form of terrorism. These manifestations will only disappear if governments make energetic and sincere efforts, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations.

[Al-Hamid] Pakistani-Indian relations have deteriorated mainly because of the Kashmir problem. How do you view the solution to this problem, especially in light of reports that the nationalist Hindus Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] will form the new Indian Government following the recent election results and considering that this party has hostile designs against Pakistan?

[Leghari] Kashmir is another problem facing us. It emerged following the independence of Pakistan and India. The plan was that Kashmir would either be annexed to India or Pakistan, based on the choice of the majority of the people. Unfortunately, this did not happen in Kashmir. The Indians tried to impose a fait accompli policy in Kashmir. About 90 percent of the people in Kashmir do not want to be ruled by India. The Indian Government sent troops to Kashmir to occupy it. Former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru referred the Kashmir issue to the UN Security Council, which passed a resolution giving the Kashmiri people the right to decide whether to join India or Pakistan. However, this problem has remained unresolved. The UN resolution on Kashmir is the oldest unimplemented resolution. The Pakistanis and the Kashmiris are calling for the need to implement this resolution.

When I attended the Sark conference in India last year, I was informed that the Indian prime minister, some opposition leaders, and a group of journalists have admitted that India has not been able to solve the Kashmir problem by force anytime in the past. How much force can it use when it has so far sent more than 600,000 Indian troops and paramilitary forces to the relatively small area of Kashmir? The Kashmir valley is 140 or 150 km long and 80 km wide. Some 90 or 95 percent of the people of Kashmir live in this area. If India cannot solve the problem with such a large force, how many more troops does it need? When I mentioned this to the Indian officials, they told me that India has only 300,000 troops in Kashmir; not 600,000. I then noted that even this number represents the largest concentration of troops deployed by any government against a small group of people. I added that I will summon the ambassadors of foreign countries to give them details about these forces, their number, and their deployment. The Pakistani Foreign Ministry has prepared a memorandum in this regard. We were able to prove that there were 600,000 Indian troops deployed in Kashmir. The Indian authorities did not deny this. I then asked the Indian officials how can they subdue a nation by force and against its will? I think no force can subdue a nation. The only way to solve the problem is through peaceful negotiations. Pakistan would like to hold talks through international mediators or a special conference. We do not want to hold negotiations for the

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sake of negotiations only. We want negotiations that can lead to a permanent solution. We realize that this cannot happen overnight and that elections have taken place in India. It does not matter who comes to power in India. Since Kashmir represents a problem to them, the policies will remain the same whether the nationalist Hindu Party or the Congress Party wins the elections. They must abandon the idea that Kashmir is part of India. The entire world knows that it is a disputed area. When the Indian prime minister referred the dispute to the UN Security Council and the Security Council passed a resolution concerning it, no one thought that India would renege on its acceptance of this resolution. This is the reason Kashmir has remained a disputed area. The Kashmir people are getting tired and do not want elections. India tried to hold elections in Kashmir in the past, but participation did not exceed 3.12 percent. This time they want to hold elections in Kashmir in the presence of more than 600,000 troops, using the carrot and stick method. The political leaders in this region have already expressed their total rejection. Even India's man in Kashmir, Faruq 'Abdallah [as transliterated], has expressed his opposition to this type of elections. Consequently, we strongly believe that the only way to resolve this problem is to reach a peaceful settlement. We are looking toward a better future in this area, which includes about 1 billion Indians and Pakistanis, representing 1.5 or 1.6 [as published] of the world population. Most of the people in this area live under the poverty line. A peaceful solution to the Kashmir problem could reduce the forces deployed there, end the existing conflict between us, and stop the arms race caused by this conflict. Our two peoples will have a better future because of economic prosperity, mutual trade, and the projects that will be established, such as the oil pipelines from Turkmenistan to India and Pakistan. We also must not overlook the trade routes to Central Asia, from which the Indian economy and the other countries in the area could benefit very much. Despite the wars that broke out between us, we have managed to solve all our problems with India, including the conflict over water in 1960. Therefore, we hope, also, to reach a satisfactory solution to the Kashmir issue.

[Al-Hamid] How do you evaluate the Saudi-Pakistani relations?

[Leghari] The Saudi-Pakistani relations are distinctive and strong, and go back a long time. We are keen to strengthen these relations in all the political, economic, social, and cultural fields. Saudi Arabia is considered one of the most important states in the area in view of the rational policies it pursues on Arab and Islamic issues. We appreciate the positive and distinctive role the government of the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques is playing in this respect. I would like to emphasize that the Pakistani people harbor complete respect and appreciation for the Saudi Government and people.

[Al-Hamid] His Royal Highness, Interior Minister Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, has recently announced that the perpetrators of the al-'Alya' bomb explosion have been arrested. How do you view this accomplishment?

[Leghari] We view it as a source of pride and great achievement for Saudi Arabia. It shows the capability and efficiency of the Saudi security officer, w[illegible] can compare with any security officer in the world. We received this report with satisfaction and admiration because we want Saudi Arabia to enjoy security and stability.

Pakistan: PML Official Forecasts Rapid Fall of PPP Government

96AS0026E Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 18 Apr 96 pp 16-19

[Interview with Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed by Saud Sahir; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed is prominent among politicians hailing from the middle class who are self-made. He is neither a son of a famous father nor did he inherit politics or membership to an assembly. He is neither a mill owner or a landlord. He was not born even with a brass spoon much less a silver spoon. However, he has achieved the position which thousands of aspiring politicians cannot reach just by hard work. Various governments have been testing his courage and steadfastness for the last 28 years. He succeeded in every test. When Ayub Khan and later Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto jailed him, it was not easy to believe what to expect from this skinny student from Garden College who was in the zeal of his youth. It was impossible to think there was a hope for a young man without resources against the Pakistan People's Party [PPP] that had vanquished all traditional politicians in 1970. In 1985, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed proved all traditional politicians wrong and shocked the whole area. The speedy political rabbits could not compete with his slow but steady and consistent effort to keep moving.

The popular belief was that it would be difficult to contest the PPP if elections were held on party basis. However, the PPP pitted different candidates against Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed during the next party-based elections. None of them could even lick his

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dust. All these three candidates were from big money and families, however, the love of the people made a believer of them all. The politics of money lost and Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed continued to increase his number of voters with each election. Despite the belief of popular support, the PPP was left hankering for votes in Rawalpindi.

When Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed was elected to the assembly a fourth time, he became a thorn in the side of PPP. A "judge" with a remote control in someone else's hand was found to deal with him. Earlier, Benazir Bhutto had overwhelmed a PPP assembly member and she thought that Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed would also prove to be like Haji Nawaz Khokhar. However, he proved to be an "iron slap."

Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed was also a cabinet member. However, he is perhaps the only minister in Pakistan's history who never left his house, which has no modern facilities and is located in a narrow alley, where he had spent his childhood and youth. That is where all his childhood friends live and he is still living there.

The people of Rawalpindi loved him from the beginning, however, this mild warmth of love for him changed into a raging fire after he was jailed for 18 months. The youthfulness of his style is still there and those who tried to undermine him are ashamed now.

He has been out of jail for several days now and has answered many Sahirs posed by reporters. He also has said something in the assembly and still has a lot to say. We are presenting to the readers the first detailed interview that he gave to the TAKBEER after his release.

[Sahir] Mr. Ahmed tell us something about your experience in the jail.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] Jail is not a new experience for me and my punishment during Benazir Bhutto's time was not unexpected, either. I know this lady will not be able to run her government properly and by her actions will contradict all her claims for being democratic and supporter of human rights. The world will know that the PPP and the Bhutto family mistakes democracy for their keeping themselves in power. The Bhutto family plays politics (which is a game of chance) like gamblers. A gambler loses everything in his efforts to win everything. She knew that Tehrik-i Nijat was my idea. I was not deluded when I was arrested. I knew how I would be treated. You have seen the whole proceeding of my case and you also know Latif Ali Malik. You are aware of late Altaf Hussain's (former governor) interest in my case. How I spent 18 months in the jail is a separate story. However, I am thankful to God for giving me forbearance. I have confronted oppression and now am in position to say with my head held high that I have kept the promises on which I had received votes from the people. God has awarded me in turn with the love of people the price of which no man can pay. It is God's gift that makes a place in our hearts for the oppressed. However, being jailed this time was a new experience for me for two reasons. First, I had the opportunity to read the Koran more carefully. I had studied Sayyed Abulilahi Mowdudi's interpretation of the Koran in the past too, however, the way I could focus on it in the solitude of the jail provided me a great fulfillment. I also received the knowledge how proud people become target of punishment in God's earth.

Second, my experience in south Punjab jails showed me how men could treat other men. Here I learned how the so-called politicians who support landlords, holy men, and criminals treat human beings. These are the people who raise slogans for democracy in Islamabad but do not even allow people in their constituency to breath. You have visited me in Bahawalpur jail a few times and have also published a lot about it. However, what the people know now is equal to nothing. When these waderas, landlords, and holy men come to power, they try to manage the whole nation the same way they run their own region. The prisoners who were with me were not able to understand how an assembly member could work hard and eat with them, share their sorrows, and come forward to help them.

I tell you the truth that the people in southern Punjab are longing for love. Thousands of stories are scattered within the four walls of the jail. The situation is [like the poet described]: I have been quiet for a long time; I would have said something if there was some one who listened.

I was also a prisoner, but I tried my best to be of help to other people there. There were many prisoners whose crime was their innocence! I helped to arrange bails for them, settled cases, and had copies of the Koran put in the jail library. Look there! A century-old jail manual was not touched by any one to see what kind of rules the British had made for their slaves and what were the requirements for independence. This is such a sad story without an end. The newspapers and reporters should pay attention to it.

[Sahir] Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, you were discussing Tehrik-i Nijat when you went to jail. You are talking about negotiations now. What is the reason for this change?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] When I talk about negotiations, I mean peaceful change of government. The present government has failed at every front. Inflation

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and unemployment have reached their apex. The economic and financial policies of this government have not failed because there never were any policies. Its priorities are not determined. Our currency has been devalued four times in three months. It has no economic goal, therefore, devaluation of the currency benefits neither the government nor the nation. Instead, problems are increasing. All foreign affairs are out of control. Iran and China who are our traditional friends are extending their hands toward our old enemy for becoming its friends. The number of person who listened to us in the OIC is decreasing and the U.S. pressure is increasing. Pakistan is helpless on the foreign front. Law and order within the nation have deteriorated. An average citizen does not feel safe.

Now, in this situation this belief is being spread that Benazir and Nawaz Sharif both are unacceptable. I am trying to say that when Benazir has been unsuccessful in every area, Nawaz Sharif should be given the opportunity in order to strengthen the democratic rule, let the two-party system progress, and the smaller parties to have the opportunity to decide their direction. I feel that democracy is in danger and the fact is that if democracy is harmed now it will be Benazir Bhutto's fault. The world knows that when democracy was threatened recently, Nawaz Sharif had sacrificed his government.

[Sahir] You used to talk about benefactors before going to jail.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I do not mention that now because the Pakistani army has gotten a clean and popular leadership after a long time. This military leadership emerged on its own merit and it is possible that the military will discharge its duty to the people.

[Sahir] When Benazir's government was dismissed in '90, she said that she made some mistakes and will not repeat those mistakes when she returns to power.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] You are not so naive as to believe whatever Benazir says with your eyes closed. I want to say that foreign education and residency in the United States and Great Britain have not changed her. The time has proved that Benazir had played a role in exacerbating the problems in our nation. None of these was created by the opposition. I believe that Benazir should have relinquished power a long time ago seeing how strong the opposition is and how weak her government is. Benazir Bhutto has forced the nation into such a situation because of her obstinacy and stubbornness. God forbid if we face similar situation as Cambodia and Ethiopia had to face.

[Sahir] They are talking about troika of power in our country. Everyone knows what it means. Now, however, they are talking about yet another troika.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] Yes, a new role of the courts has emerged. The judiciary branch is working hard to win trust of the people in the law and the courts. I say that the decision of the Supreme Court will be implemented and no one will be able to stop it. Anyone, who stops this decision will drown in this strong current.

There is nothing new about a democratic nation having three constitutional pillars. The effort to make one of these, the judiciary, ineffective has caused the judiciary to wake up. Now the president has started to talk. Some people had the misunderstanding that the president was silenced. Now they will see for some time that the president is talking, and talking a lot. There should be no doubt that the people have lost confidence in our government. The troika being created now is very democratic in nature and judiciary is playing an important role in it.

[Sahir] You are talking about change. What kind of change will that be?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I think that responsible people have reached the conclusion that the present government can neither resolve our national problems nor can it get foreign help. What is worse, it cannot even keep good relations with our traditional friends. Iran, with which we did only have traditional diplomatic relations but also close friendly relations, is also extending its friendly hand to India. China held joint naval exercises with India for the first time in 40 years. Our natural allies are also drifting apart. The United States whose praises our governments sings day and night has not give us any thing. Our government considers itself to be closest to the United States which has imposed the most restrictions on Pakistan during this government. Can you tell us about even the weakest nation which could get neither arms nor money from the United States? Even average U.S. Senators do not gave us any support.

[Sahir] You are talking about change. Can you tell me about its model?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] The situation is changing so fast that any thing could happen any time. Several theories are floating in the market. There are also talking about change in the House also. There are people who are thinking of totally overhauling the system. There are talks about finding our people's wishes and desires by a referendum. However, I say that the government should make a decision about it on its own at the right time and approach the people for a fresh mandate. This is the best way to protect democracy and the democratic

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government. Anything could happen if the government does not do it. Would not it be better if Benazir Bhutto accepts to sit in the opposition. Is not it better than losing everything?

[Sahir] Has the present government made some election reforms?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] In my opinion, the government wants to hold some municipal elections first and win these by trickery. It wants to prove that it is very popular. However, Benazir Bhutto does not know that her father was told he would be killed if he cheated. Tell me, is it possible to hold elections in this country without identity cards? There are five lakh votes in my election district. If each voter is identified and checked, will they be able to finish polling within a month? These are childish decisions. How will these be implemented? I am telling you to keep watching. Whoever will hold elections will direct all the reforms. I think she will want to hold elections when the water has risen above her head. Therefore, I suggest that the situation should be resolved by talks and based on the package offered by the Muslim League.

[Sahir] The reaction of Mrs. Bhutto after the Supreme Court decision has not been supported by any group. Mr. Nawaz Sharif did make a suggestion to the government. However, there was the sudden accident of the death of Javed Ashraf in Lahore. What do such accidents at such time mean?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I cannot say anything about all these incidents. There are hundreds of government agencies and no one knows who is doing what. Just like in the United States where many things happen without government's knowledge. Our nation did not have any strong leadership that could control these agencies.

You see a few months ago when the situation was the same, this very person who had mistreated Aitzaz Ahsan arrested Nawaz Sharif's father in a very insulting manner. Now, when they were talking about negotiations, Javed Ashraf was shot dead. Some people just do not want the establishment of a democratic system.

[Sahir] You said that Tehrik-i Nijat was your idea and now you are saying something different.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] At that time I thought that the logical result of Tehrik-i Nijat would be mid-term elections. Now it seems that they are thinking about dismissing both the major political powers. I support the idea of letting the people decide.

[Sahir] What do you think about the decision your party had made to meet the president...?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I think this is a good decision. The situation is changing very fast. My party's decision to go all the way to the president to preserve democracy is a good decision. President Farooq Leghari also seems to be changing. If he wants to prove that he is the president, we have to cooperate with him.

[Sahir] One idea is that the change should not involve Nawaz Sharif. If there is such a change in the House that Benazir Bhutto is sitting in the opposition benches, what will you do?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] At least, I will not participate in any change that keeps Nawaz Sharif out. It does not matter what price I have to pay for it. Nawaz Sharif has a strong feeling of sacrifice. He had tried to make Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi the leader of the opposition. He will be willing to make sacrifices even now, however, I will not let him do that. If we are doing all this for others, why should we make so much sacrifices and accept abuse? I am going to play any role if a third person wants to give Benazir Bhutto another chance.

[Sahir] What is similarity between the situations in '77 and '96?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I am telling you that the present situation is worse than the one in '77. In '77, the situation was so bad that the country's affairs were at a stand still. The same is true now. An average person, a rickshaw puller, a taxi driver all know that our country is facing destruction. Then there is Benazir Bhutto who keeps saying that she is running a very successful government.

[Sahir] What is the reason for the opposition's failure to bring the people into the streets despite all the problems? You also have said that the people are totally disappointed in Benazir Bhutto.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I do not agree that the opposition has failed in bringing the people into the streets. I think Nawaz Sharif is thinking, and I agree with him, that somehow the government should enter the "stadium of elections." Nawaz Sharif knows that whenever a campaign is launched, its results are not what the politicians want and a third groups emerges. We have been trying not to let a third group interfere. Benazir Bhutto and only Benazir Bhutto will be responsible if a third power emerges.

[Sahir] Why have not you succeeded in getting support from other parties to stop what has been happening in Karachi?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] In our country, political coalitions are based on vested interests. Compared to the PPP and the Muslim League, representation of other

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parties in the national Assembly is almost negligible. The majority of the nation's representatives has been divided into these two parties. We are willing to form coalitions and the Muslim League had formed committees for this purpose. However, when we talk about outside cooperation for protecting democracy and keeping stability, we should talk about election coalitions first. The main problem is getting rid of this inept, negligent, and mischievous government so that we can protect our nation from danger. The smaller parties do talk about cooperation in the future, they are not willing to cooperate to deal with the present situation.

However, I can predict that you will learn about a major coalition within a few hours or days after this interview!

[Sahir] You mean some kind of coalition is being discussed?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] Yes. A clear picture of what is happening will emerge in a day or two.

[Sahir] Is the fact that there is no successful campaign against the government and you have not been successful in bringing the people into the streets result of inner strife in the Muslim League?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I have already answered part of your Sahir earlier. It is totally fabricated that we have been unsuccessful in bringing the people into the streets. You have to note that the Muslim League has been solidified as a party for the first time. It is accepting abuse and showing its fortitude. The whole credit for it goes to Nawaz Sharif.

[Sahir] Let us hear about the politics in Rawalpindi now.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] The day I was sentenced to seven years in jail was the day Benazir Bhutto gave a 430 million rupee package to Rawalpindi. She thought that there will be a mid-term election there. However, with God's grace, Rawalpindi is a Muslim League's stronghold. May God protect us from evil eye. The Muslim League will get most votes from this district in the next election and this will prove to be Muslim League's Leningrad. The people are knowledgeable and I can say that they will not be deceived by Benazir even when she builds roads made of mirrors. This is the Sahir of pride of Rawalpindi people. I was in-charge of Rawalpindi district during the last election and we won 19 out of the total 20 seats. God willing, we will win all the 20 seats this time.

[Sahir] It is being said that you were released because of external pressure.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] It was the first time in Pakistan's history when a legislator was sentenced in a case with which his association was not proved. I was in jail when the police claimed to have recovered a Kilashnikof from Lal Haveli. This drama was staged at that time. The inter-parliamentary unit and the U.S. Congress took notice of it. The time has changed now. A large number of former Pakistanis are voters in the United States now. They informed he Cabinet and the Congress about it. My case was tried there very effectively. The newspapers also supported me and it was said clearly that the disgusting way the government had handled this case has hurt the judiciary branch's prestige. I have to say that my case played a role in the Supreme Court's decision. The judicial branch believes that the government had forced it to punish me. A Senator Brown argued my case very effectively. I am sorry that my case was the cause of ridicule for this government. The government lawyer says so and I am arrested; the government lawyer then says so and I am released! I do not accept this kind of release. My lawyer is Mr. Aijaz Batalwi and he is going to the Supreme Court against it.

[Sahir] Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, why did Benazir Bhutto pick you?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] What can I say except that when the governments are ready to fall, God forces them to make all kind of mistakes and helps people like me keep their honor. I would say that after seeing how Haji Nawaz Khokhar surrendered, my attitude convinced many people that the government was ignorant since it had put pressure on a person who did not owe a paisa, did not own a mill, and was not owned by a group. I was charged with owning a Kilashnikof. The people considered it an insult.

[Sahir] Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, you have written a book, SON OF PAKISTAN, and have also said here several times that the landlords are responsible for the downfall of this country. Is this the result of a sudden realization in the jail or of lengthy thought?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I did not say anything new. They have been talking about it for centuries. However, my comment is being taken seriously because I have said that as a member of a party in which landlords play a very effective role. I spent one year in jails in Jhang, Multan, and Bahawalpur. Those of us who live in cities are not aware of the atrocities the people suffer there. What the landlords are doing in southern Punjab and inner Sindh is very frightening. For example, a person said while standing on the hanging platform that he was innocent and he was being hanged because he wanted to live in his region according to his own philosophy. I am not campaigning against a person. I want to take the Muslim League to the level where it stops people from enslaving other human. These people received land

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for being loyal to the British and are ruling us, and the children of those who sacrificed their lives for our nation's independence are begging to work as peons. I cannot accept this. I will not hesitate if I have to make any kind of sacrifice for that. My goal is life is to help fight so that people get rid of slavery of landlords.

Finally, I want to say what the government is doing in Karachi is not appropriate. The government is trying hard to declare the whole Mohajir community terrorist. People are being murdered by the police. I say that the courts have the right to punish the criminals; not the police. We should try to reduce the hatred felt by the people and efforts should be made to include the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM] in the national mainstream. Pride and blind faith should not be taken to a level where we have to pay the price of personal or group interest in the form of national interest.

[Sahir] Some people comment that Benazir Bhutto is fighting someone else's war in Karachi.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] You are talking about Karachi. Benazir Bhutto is fighting other people's wars at every front. She does not know what she is doing. The law and order situation is so bad that even chemists have armed guards on premises.

[Sahir] Then there is the Kashmir issue.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I think that Kashmiris are becoming disillusioned with our government's policy and this is Benazir's fault. She stopped the Kashmiri campaign by mutual agreement. Had such a situation occurred in a Pakistani region, Indian military would have arrived there. In Srinagar, a Kilashnikof bullet costs 40 rupees and we waste hundreds of rounds in streets during weddings here.

[Sahir] What is your opinion about the role of the Kashmir Committee?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] It is deplorable. I was the only Kashmiri in the Kashmir Committee and they expelled me. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan is trying to make the company famous and raise funds. He knows neither Kashmir's geography nor its history. He has lived in Ahrar all his life. In '51 his political life was threatened so he joined the Muslim League. Someone should tell us what the Committee has done so far. They go abroad and address the persons who come to embassies to get visas and then they think that the Kashmir issue has been resolved!

[Sahir] People say that there are three constitutional pillar [branches] of government. The government has already overpowered the legislative branch in the prison case and now is entangled with the judicial branch. What do you think will happen?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I can firmly say that the government will have to do what the judicial branch says and anyone who comes in its way will drown like a dry thing. My advise is that "after being hit 100 times by a shoe, one should try avoiding eating 100 onions." This is a new idea and a new fact and the government is having difficulty realizing this all. People will see that the judicial branch will go even further where the control of judiciary will be clear.

[Sahir] It is said that the Muslim League could have united in 1993 but this could not happen because of Nawaz Sharif's obstinacy.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] This is the assumption of the people who want to sacrifice principles just to get what they want. Hamid Nasir Chath had animosity against Nawaz Sharif and went this far in revenge to join the PPP railroad. Now you see that Chath's six followers are members of the National Assembly and four of them are cabinet members. The so-called chief minister of the state is also a member of the Chath "League" which does not even exist. You will see that Aarif Nakai will also join the PPP. Saif Allah family had always followed power and will participate in any negative action. Hamid Nasir Chath will not join the PPP, but he will not be qualified to be called a Muslim Leaguer, either.

[Sahir] Any chance of unity in the Muslim League?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] This will only waste time. There is no other Muslim League than the Muslim League [PML] (N). Malik Qasim also has a Muslim League faction as does Sheikh Liaqat. However, their is situation is like "now they are here, now they are not."

[Sahir] The Muslim League has distanced itself from religious parties also.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] Let us draw a circle around Pakistan. The power of Islamic votes has increased in all the countries, however, the people in Pakistan have expressed hatred and apathy toward religious parties and their leaders. There is still a majority of Islam-loving voters in Pakistan. The religious parties, however, made unwise decisions resulting in the present situation. The people have not disappointed those who asked for their votes in the name of Mustafa. The majority votes we have are not because we are secular. We believe in Allah and his Prophet. I believe that the Muslim League and the parties you call religious have the same philosophy and we do not consider them different than us. I believe that the goal should not be hurt when personalities clash. When we have a lofty goal, seats in the House should

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not be the priority. Some people have risked their goals just to get a seat.

[Sahir] Now they are saying that the assemblies have failed in resolving problems.

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] It is correct and it will continue until we have people in assemblies who have problems and have faced problems. If the assemblies have membership of people who are causes of these problems, there will not be any solution. The people are disappointed with the Parliament. The assemblies will have to stand up and fight just like the judicial branch did.

[Sahir] What possibilities are there for this to happen?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] If this does not happen in the Parliament, it will die. Only God will help assemblies if they do not fight for their prestige.

[Sahir] In your opinion, how long will the PPP last?

[Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed] I have a feeling that it will last until the budget is presented. It is also possible that the present government will not even be able to introduce the budget. I consider the situation before and after the budget to be very scary.

Pakistan: Need for Islamic Based Democracy Stressed

96AS0026A Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 25 Apr 96 p 9

[Article by Mohammed Salahuddin: "If Pakistan Is a Body Then Islam is Its Soul"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islam for Pakistanis is not just a way of worshipping; it has deep roots in our political life and our national existence. If Pakistan is a body then Islam is its soul. If we were not Muslims living in this subcontinent and we if did not have a relationship with Islam, we would not have been Pakistanis. The foundation of our nation is Islam. We had presented the two-nation theory during the freedom struggle based on this belief. The referral to democracy is not the basis for our separate existence, because democracy could be had in [an undivided] India also. Secularism cannot become our ideology either, because Indian democracy is based on secularism. The Muslims still have freedom to worship there. Economy cannot be the reason for the birth of Pakistan as the regions that formed Pakistan were the most backward regions in the subcontinent and those who took part in the campaign to establish Pakistan were from prosperous and developed regions. Why were they interested in moving from prosperous regions to poor regions? The vision of an Islamic state is what mobilized the Muslims and encouraged them to sacrifice their lives, property, and honor. Now, the more we separate Pakistan from Islam, the weaker Pakistan will become. The slogan of Bangla nationalism was raised instead of Islam and Pakistan, and our nation was divided into two parts. Now, we hear slogans supporting Sindhi, Mohajir, Pakhtoon, Balochi, Punjabi, and Saraiki nationalism and see scenes of killing of our own brothers. It is Islam that unites us and Islam does not allow any prejudice. It does not erase our ethnic, regional, and cultural identity; it insists on keeping these in the valid boundaries and in the wider periphery of Islam. If we make these prejudices the foundation of our nation and politics, then Islam will pull away its blessings and support.

No doubt, we want democracy also. However, if those who use this word do not agree on its meaning then the whole attitude changes. The vision of democracy for us comes from Khilafat Rashida while some people consider it to be related to the British parliamentary system. The British democracy is based on secularism. Their politics has no relationship with religion while the Khilafat Rashida model of democracy is based on the Koran. In the British system, the Parliament is the highest authority while in an Islamic democracy, the parliament is just a Majlis-i-Shoora and the highest authority is Allah himself. All legal systems are based on the Koran. If this reference is changed then the attitude of rulers also changes. In an Islamic state, the fear of God is foremost which is not true in a western democracy. However, the importance of character cannot be ignored there either. In the United States, we have examples of President Nixon, Teddy Kennedy, Gary Hart, and John Tower while we have the examples of Perfumo in the United Kingdom. However, we do not pay attention to this aspect. Western democracy, be it presidential or parliamentary, French or German, Dutch or Scandinavian, shares one common principle: the person who represents the majority gets the right to lead the government. In other words, the person who has more than 50 percent of the votes wins. However, we have been ignoring this condition of democracy. We have given to right to govern to people who received only 33 to 37 percent of the votes and have the remaining 67 or 63 percent ruled by them. We declare persons who get 910 votes in a 13,000-vote municipal area or 4,000 votes in a 74,000-vote election district the "representative of the people." How long can we tolerate this fraud? Until the principle of majority vote is realized, we will continue to deceive ourselves in the name of democracy. Fascism, Zamindar [the landlord system], and control of the rich will continue being forced on us. Another curse which we face and have had bitter experience with is the participation by parties

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based on regional and ethnic identity in the election process. Our Constitution considers canvassing for votes using race, ethnicity, region, beliefs, and language a crime. However, in practice our politics runs on this system. If we use the Turkish system of allowing only national parties to participate in elections, then this problem can be rectified. We often are engaged in debates while the Koran emphasizes the character of the ruler more than the administrative system. It does provide principles of government, but does not give a model of any specific government system. After all, systems change with time. In a single system, it praises one and condemns the other. It condemns Fraun and Nimrod and praises Hazrat Daud, Hazrat Suleiman, Hazrat Zualqarnin, and Hazrat Yusuf who followed the same principles of government. This is because one person's role is for personal government and the other's is being used for Allah's rule. Hazrat Umar Bin Abdul Aziz, Salahuddin Ayubi, Amir Subkatgin, and Aurangzeb Alamgir were all kings. If we compare their governments with the rulers with bad characters, we cannot put them in the same category. History proves the fact that if a good man becomes a ruler in a bad system, he proves a blessing to the regime. On the other hand, if a bad person becomes a ruler, he will ruin even the best system. One example of this is [Prime Minister] Bhutto's period which has the elements of elections, constitution, and democracy. However, her bad character has not helped the nation despite a good government system; it has proved to be a time for the worst kind of fascism.

Pakistan: Defense Minister Says Probe on Mirage Deal Under Way

BK1206041696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 11 Jun 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by Staff Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, June 10 — In response to the news item published by THE MUSLIM on June 3, 1996 about kickbacks in Mirage-111 deal, the Defence Minister, Aftab Shaban Mirani told National Assembly here on Monday [10 June] that an inquiry was under way to find out facts.

Responding to an adjournment motion on the subject sought to be moved by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Gohar Ayub Khan and a number of other opposition members, the minister admitted that the Director General [DG] Defense Purchases violated his orders for stopping initial payment of the deal and had been removed from the post on this charge.

The Minister said if the opposition so demanded he could ask the Chief of the Air Staff or some responsible officers of PAF [Pakistan Air Force] to brief the Standing Committee on Defense (of the House) and to explain their point of view.

Giving details Mr. Mirani said the matter came to his knowledge on May 24 and on the very first day he ordered an Inquiry into the deal. The Minister said at that time he was abroad and directed the Defense Secretary to ask DG Defense Purchases to stop the payment but despite instructions he made the payment on June 5, 1996. He said the DG was removed for violating the orders and an inquiry is in progress to find out other details.

The Minister said, in all, 40 Mirage-III aircraft are being purchased and, after their overhauling, a piece would cost 1.8 million dollars. After fitting of avionics and up-gradation these aircraft would be as good as new Mirage-V and their total cost would come to 118 million dollars. About not availing the facilities of upgradation at Kamra, the Minister claimed that Kamra had limited capacity and it was not possible to complete the task within two years. He said our defense requirements necessitated expeditious overhauling which was to be done in France.

Earlier, while making speeches on the admissibility of the motion, opposition members described it as a mega scandal and wanted a threadbare discussion on the matter in the House.

Gohar Ayub Khan termed the purchase of the aircraft as good but demanded that charges of kickbacks should be looked into since it involved a huge amount of about 20 million dollars.

Iftikhar Gillani was more vocal in demanding a full-fledged debate on the matter. He said the government's reservations were understandable as it involved the Ministry of Defense. But a responsible journalist had published a very detailed report on the issue and it should not be swept under the carpet. He said it is bringing a bad name to the country and the Armed Forces. He said we should not be afraid of discussing a matter pertaining to defense forces as we have been discussing matters relating to the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition as well. Chaudhary [Ch.] Nisar Ali described it as a mega scandal. He said for the first time serious differences and contradictory approach of the three wings of the armed forces have come to light on the deal. Sheikh Rashid Ahmad, Mr. Hamza, Ch. Jafar Iqbal, Abdus Sattar Laleka, Tariq Bandey, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, Kh Asif, Asfandyar Wali, Yasin Khan Wattoo, Syed Abbas Shah, Ejaz Shafi, Javed Ali, Rao Qaiser Ali and Majeed Malik all were of the view that since it involved corruption charges the issue must be discussed in detail in the House.

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However, after a statement by the Minister, the opposition members did not press the motion. The Minister said he would get back to the House after completion of the inquiry. At one point a lot of heat was generated when the Defense Minister referred to an article appearing in NEWSWEEK or TIME in 1962 mentioning that a captain who had just retired from the service had become richest man of the country.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Defense Ministry Reports Clashes; Sinhala 'Detainees' Released

BK1106122396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 11 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists have freed four Sinhala detainees. Western aid agency officials said yesterday [10 June] that they have been handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC]. The detainees were released on Sunday. [9 June] They were freed during the visit by an ICRC delegation of a group of prisoners held by the rebels in the northern Wanni region. The officials were unable to say where exactly the detainees were held. They were freed after about four months of captivity.

Meanwhile, the LTTE attacked a checkpoint manned by homeguards at (Paimaduwa) in the Anuradhapura District before dawn yesterday. Troops were rushed to assist the home guards who retaliated effectively and forced the terrorist to withdraw. The operational headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that one soldier and four home guards died in the confrontation. Three more guards were injured. A police sub-inspector was killed on Sunday when the LTTE fired at him while he was proceeding to the police post at Alankeni in the Trincomalee District. Other police officers retaliated and the terrorists withdrew. A civilian was hurt in the crossfire.

The operational headquarters of Ministry of Defense in a news release this morning says that, around 1700 yesterday, troops in ambush confronted a group of terrorists at Kalmadu in the Batticaloa District, killing two of them. The security forces recovered two hand grenades. In another incident last morning at Nachivantivu, also in the Batticaloa District, troops killed two terrorists and wounded two others. Troops during a subsequent search recovered a push bicycle, two hand grenades, and a pouch belonging to the terrorists. In Karainagar in Jaffna, LTTE terrorists had set out two improvised explosive devices on two coastal patrol crafts which were anchored in the Karainagar pier. Three naval personnel were injured due to the explosion. This incident took place around 0500 today.

Troops launched an offensive early this year to capture an area between Kilali and Elephant Pass in the Thenmarachchi division. Advancing troops experienced light enemy resistance from the direction of Nakarkoyil to the southeast of the Jaffna peninsula. Troops overcame terrorist resistance without much defenses with Elephant Pass Army detachment by 1830. This implies that the security forces vehicles can move between Elephant Pass and Kilali, enabling easier supply system to troops based at Elephant Pass and Vettilaikerni. During the advance, the troops came across a large LTTE abandoned by the terrorists. [sentence as heard].

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Offensive in Thenmarachchi

BK1106154096 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 7 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ten soldiers were killed in a surprise attack launched by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] in Thenmarachchi yesterday. [6 June] A military contingent advancing from its position at Vempirai junction on a search operation, at 0645 yesterday, was attacked within a distance of 100 meters. Ten soldiers were killed, while others managed to escape with injuries. The LTTE, carrying out the offensive for 20 minutes, also attacked military positions with mortars. The loss incurred by the military in this mortar attack is not known. A few weapons were seized by the LTTE. An attack was carried out in the same area last Tuesday [4 June] as well. Two soldiers were killed in an attack on a military contingent that was going down the street. The LTTE did not suffer any losses. Valiant Tiger Katti attained martyrdom in today's successful offensive.

Major Netaji, alias Nallaiah Lingabalan, from Rudrapuram attained martyrdom in an offensive on troops in Anakkottai at the end of last month. We pay our tributes to those national heroes who completely dedicated themselves in the holy war to liberate our soil from our enemies.

It is believed that the Sri Lankan side suffered heavy losses in another surprise attack carried out in the east today. A police contingent, patrolling the streets in the area near Welikanda, was reportedly attacked. Citing military sources, BBC reports that at least nine policemen were killed in an attack carried out in the east this morning. A Colombo newspaper reports that three policemen and a soldier died when they consumed poisoned liquor at a (?liquor shop) in Velikamam. This incident is reported to have taken place recently.

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A teacher who was walking on the road was intentionally hit by a truck belonging to the Sri Lankan military. This gory incident took place at Aladi locality in Velvettiturai last week. The 48-year old part time teacher, Thirugnanasundaram, who is the father of four children and was working at Velvettiturai Sivaguru school was hit by the truck. Delayed reports say that the teacher, who was admitted to the hospital in critical condition, succumbed to his injuries.

The Tigers' aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Thanks.

Sri Lanka: Security Forces Reportedly Clear New Passage in Jaffna

BK1206020996 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 12 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Security forces in the North have successfully completed another offensive to clear a passage between Kilaly and Elephant Pass in the Thenmarachchi division, defence sources said.

This was one of the few areas still not under military control in the Jaffna peninsula. Kilaly is about 13 Km from Elephant Pass.

"Now security forces vehicles can freely ply between Palaly and Elephant Pass, to supply the requirements of troops based at Elephant Pass and Vettilaikerni," the sources said. Troops had earlier captured the roads between Palaly and Kilaly. Road access to elephant pass had been cut off since 1991 and supplies were sent by air.

The offensive began at first light on Monday. [10 June] Advancing troops experienced light enemy resistance from the direction of Nagarkovil to the south east of the peninsula. The Tigers had used mortars and small arms fire.

"But we overcame resistance with superior fire power and linked up Palaly with Elephant Pass, through Kilaly, by early evening." Elephant Pass is about 40 Km southeast of Jaffna town, which the troops captured in December last year.

The sources said two soldiers were killed, and one officer and 12 soldiers were wounded during the operation, which completed the military's takeover of the Jaffna peninsula. Tiger casualties were not immediately available.

Troops had earlier completed Riviresa I, II and III operations to re-take most parts of the Valikamam, Thenmarachchi and Vadamarachchi divisions of the peninsula, including the strategic Kilali lagoon.

Troops engaged in the operation also came across a large camp abandoned by the LTTE and other strong defences.

Defence sources said the capture of the Palaly-Elephant Pass stretch would further facilitate the government's drive to restore normalcy and civil administration in the peninsula. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reportedly Kills 14 in Attack on Sinhala Village

BK1206020796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 12 Jun 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] OVER 200 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] stormed a Sinhala village, 16 miles off Puttalam, North Western Province, on Monday [10 June] midnight and hacked to death 14 civilians including women and children. They also set ablaze their houses located at Lunuoya, Elavankulam, a Sinhala village close to the Wilpattu Sanctuary.

According to our Puttalam Central Group Correspondent, the bodies of six of the 14 victims, including two women and a child of about 10-years-old, were removed to the Puttalam hospital morgue. They could not be identified as the bodies were badly burnt.

The security forces are combing the area to hunt down the attackers.

Puttalam police are investigating.

According to reports the day before the incident, Tigers had abducted three persons from this same village (a father and his two sons), of whom one son had been released after he had been badly assaulted by the Tigers. Police are investigating this incident following a complaint by the son.

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